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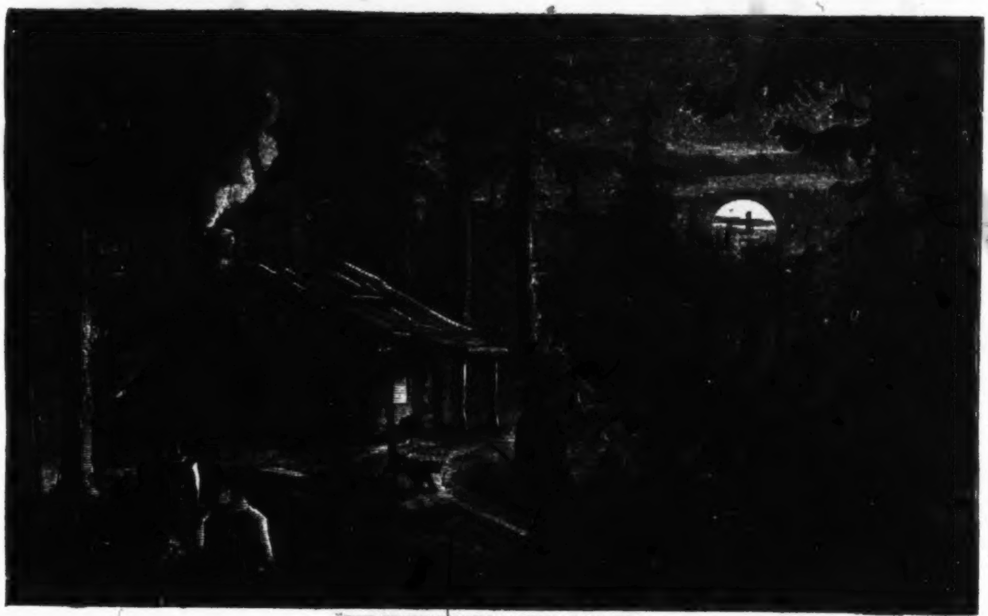

THE PINEY-WOODS CABIN AT NIGHT.

AFOOT AND ALONE;

A WALK

FROM SEA TO SEA

BY THE SOUTHERN ROUTE.

ADVENTURES AND OBSERVATIONS

IN

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, NEW MEXICO, ARIZONA, TEXAS, ETC.

BY

STEPHEN POWERS.

ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

> "With Nature's freedom at the heart;
> To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
> And luxuries extract from bleakest moors;
> With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
> And having rights in all that we behold."
> —*Wordsworth.*

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PREFATORY.

THE walk from Sea to Sea, the story of which is here narrated, was undertaken, partly, from a love of wild adventure; partly, from a wish to make personal and ocular study of the most diverse races of the Republic.

An earnest love of Nature, even in her grimmest and sullenest moods, made me look forward with delight to the deserts of the Southern route; and my anticipations were realized. Tramping month after month across the great empire of Texas; then wandering free and glad beneath the skies of Arizona and New Mexico; beholding now and then the flag of the Republic, flaunting in its wide authority over those lonesome and hungry wastes of the Middle Continent—this is a pleasure, to be fully enjoyed only by the pedestrian. These were the happiest days of my life, and there comes to me sometimes an insatiable longing to roam again, in the large liberty and lawlessness of the prairies, and to grapple once more with the savage deserts.

The book makes no pretention to learning in ethnology or geology, but seeks simply to give some pictures of men and places, with a narrative of the incidents attending the journey.

S. P.

SACRAMENTO, *July*, 1871.

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A JOURNEY FROM SEA TO SEA.

CHAPTER I.

OUTFITTING.

"ROBERT,' said I to the colored factotum of the hotel in Raleigh, "come hither and let me behold your beauty."

Robert came and stood before me—an oldish African, say forty-five, with his head a little grizzled, his eyes popped out nearly half their diameters, and his mouth always ajar, disclosing the absence of every alternate tooth; they having been principally eliminated in the process of his youthful fights.

"Robert, I propound unto your intelligence the following theorem, to wit:—That many a bold soldier boy, in the recent sanguinary unpleasantness, who might have fought gloriously for his country, was prevented from so doing by the Quartermaster, who so overloaded him with baggage that he broke down before seeing the enemy. Do you admit the correctness of the postulate, Robert?"

"Well, sah, a nigger dat waited on a gemmen in de Sanguinary Commission, sah, he tell me de Quartermaster mighty hard on de boys sometimes, sah."

"That's it, Robert, undoubtedly. Now, I am going on a journey of some thousands of miles, and I intend to be my own Quartermaster, or rather, I am going to promote you to that office, as an experiment. You perceive scattered on the bed yonder, the entire extent of my worldly possessions. Here is my hat, Robert, and I desire you now to fill it with such articles, selected from my personal property, as you consider most necessary for my uses during a journey of that length. If you succeed in filling it according to my notions, all that remains over of my goods and chattels shall accrue to you, as the emoluments and perquisites of your office, the same to continue and appertain to yourself and your lawful heirs or assigns *in perpetuum.* You comprehend perfectly, Robert?"

"Wha' fur gwine fur to pu 'em in de hat?" asked Robert in profound astonishment.

"It is necessary for me to start very soon, Robert; will you make the experiment, or not?"

He scrutinized me with one searching look, as if to satisfy himself that I was not demented, then with another, to assure himself whether or not it was a solemn jest; then he took the hat and proceeded hesitatingly to the bedside. The bedstead was of unpainted pine, undiminished at the head, but the upper segment of the foot-board had been kicked off by some piney-woods lodger of too long legs; and on it was spread a counterpane with a white ground, upon which were depicted in green, divers crooked-necked cranes or gourds, I am uncertain which.

First, he selected a couple of gorgeous neckties, and laid them carefully in the hat. Then he took a box of collars, and endeavored to put them in also, without rumpling the neckties; but finally he had a happy inspiration, took out the collars and the neckties, wrapped the latter around the box, and then returned them triumphantly into the hat. Then he ventured another furtive glance, before I could smooth out of my face the smile with which it was wrinkling, and immediately the explosion took place.

"Yah, yah, yah! De hat won't hold nuffin more but jest dese hyur an' de socks—yah, yah!—an' mighty soon you jest go plumb naked, 'cept socks and a collar. Yah, yah, yah!"

I thought Robert would certainly have fallen on the floor. He clutched the bed-post convulsively with both hands, bowed down his head between his arms, and finally tumbled over helplessly on the bed, and the foot-board seemed about to be demolished entirely.

"Packin' a shirt in a hat!" and then he yelled outright, and the house shook under his "irrepressible laughter."

"I see, Robert, I shall have to retire you from the rank of Quartermaster, and take upon myself the high functions of that office."

So I produced a traveling-bag and placed therein the following articles:—a "diamond edition" of Longfellow, the Harper's text of Horace, a manifold note-book for the *res gestae*, a change of flannel, a tooth-brush, my sister's spool of snuff-colored thread, and my mother's hussif. This latter article was very wonderfully and inscrutably made, and contained a thimble, an elegant assortment of pins, needles and buttons, scissors, and leaves for needles, some of white flannel, daintily stitched with pink thread around the edges, and some of scarlet, stitched with white. When wrapped together it was no larger than a cylindrical nutmeg-grater; and it was of such marvelous potency in repairing rips and rents, that I herewith state my belief that, if my mother simply sat in the room with it, it could keep house itself.

I was dressed in a pair of doeskin trowsers; light top-boots, with the ends of the trowsers inserted therein; a shortish frock-coat; and a planter's hat.

Thus rigged out, and equipped with a mighty jackknife, I left Raleigh on New Year's day, 1868.

CHAPTER II.

THE TURPENTINE-MAKERS.

NEARLY everybody to whom I imparted my tremendous secret sought to dissuade me from the enterprise. I was solemnly warned that I should certainly be assassinated by the freedmen! Even Madge-howlet herself, sitting alone in a tree-top in the solemn deeps of the pineries at evening, called out to me, "You fool! you fool! fool! fool!" Nevertheless, no enemy assailed me more terrific than the robber Reynard, prowling in the gloaming by the fence, and shooting back at me, Scythian-like, a couple of blood-red bullets from the end of his wry neck.

Awful is the gloom and the solitude by night in these philosophic pines of the Old North State. Presently there comes a mournful and fitful moaning for a moment, as the wind soughs through the topmost branches. Then the wind is still, and the silence is doubly awful. Hear the dull thud of the assassin's bludgeon, and the gurgling of the blood! 'Twas only the hoarse-throated owl. Hist! see those dreadful bogeys, stalking through the woods in their flaming sarks! Fool! it is only the long gashes on the pines, faintly phosphorescing with gum.

Some hear in this plaintive lament of the pines the voice of Nature, weeping over the follies and miseries of her children. The disciples of Darwin may detect in the moaning some inchoate brother's fractional "world-soul," struggling for its human development. Every imaginative soul hears its own language, as Homer says the worshipers at Delos heard the priestesses each in his own tongue.

Of these two theories, O wise reader, "chuse you whilk." Let us dip our drinking-cups into this deft little pocket chopped in the pine, and quaff some gum-water, for it will make us wise like a medicine; and then let us reason together. For my part, I cleave to the Darwinian theory, for in no other manner can we account for the extraordinary populousness of these woods.

Here, too, it was that Sherman passed—the comet of the war—when, disdaining the meaner orbits of little men, he wheeled on his baleful flight through Confederate heavens, while his fiery train consumed many homes and hoary tyrannies together. Here it was that he returned, beneath the shadow of the Eagle and the Stars, while his cannon-wheels laughed their big chuckling laugh, as they went home, and these old woods winked with the glinting of bayonets.

Ah! how many bright star-lives, both in Northern and and Southern orbits, were blotted out in the night when this comet crushed the rival luminary of the Republic!

The first freedman I met, instead of assassinating me, grinned fearfully, when he discovered I was a Northern man. He wore but one shoe, and that was much dilapidated. His trowsers were sustained by a corn-husk belt, and he wore a government blouse, split all the way down the back, and kept to duty by a tow-string tied around his neck. Yet from his tattered breast fluttered a Union League badge, a bit of ribbon worth five cents, for which he said he expended a dollar. Said I to him:

"Uncle, do you enjoy 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul' in the Union League?"

"No, sah; I can't say as we does, sah."

"What stands between you and your soul's enjoyment, Uncle? Tell me about your troubles."

He glanced rather dubiously at his badge, as if he had a faint suspicion I might be poking fun at it; then he shifted his weight upon his other leg, as if to shift off the burden of conscience for telling the little family secret he was about to impart.

"Well, you see, sah, we was 'joyin ourselves pretty sharp, and feelin' de Jub ob de Union in de sperrit of de flesh, 'till dese hyur free niggers jined in. Dey was boun' for to rule de roost, and dey was all de time a kickin' up a fuss."

"But you are all free negroes now."

"But dese hyur is de old free niggers, I mean, afo' de wah. Dey calls us, sence de wah, Sherman's ash-cakes, and dey's all de time a kickin' up a fuss."

The boys would have deserved well of posterity if they had only exterminated that melodious "pot-rack, pot-rack!" of the southern guinea-hens. But every African fowl once boiled in Sherman's mess-kettles had risen like a Phœnix; and every one of those geese which had such an insane propensity for swallowing Federal ramrods, had reappeared upon the scene, with all the iron-rust still in its screeching throat. Wonderful is the South for the multitude of these pensive fowls, warbling "their native wood-notes wild."

Every one of the original rail-fences is rehabilitated in its pristine vermiculation. Not one is missing of those tan, baked-looking hogs, with the "imped ribs" and arching spine, which are muzzling in the pine-straw in every well well-regulated landscape of the South. Again, as before the war, slender columns of shingles flank the road, towering among the aromatic, golden snow-drifts of the Carolinas.

The fat gold of shingles gives yellow gleams from the new-made cabin-roof. Does the carpenter stretch a plummet against his work? He steps away ten paces, and ranges his infallible perpendicular by any pine.

Here, in a roadside shop, a dusky cooper beats his complaining barrel, in a kind of Runic rhyme, expounding the constitution the while to his neighbor. It is pleasant to hear these sable Federalists explain our polity so absolutely, without any of the customary friction and fire.

"Whackety-whang-whang-whang! Whackety-whang! Mind, Sam, de gallantry ob de cons'tution is 'zactly—whackety—whang!—is 'zactly what I tell you, life, liberty, and de 'suit ob property. Whackety—whang!"

"Ta'n't de 'suit ob property; it's de de 'suit ob happiness, I tell you," said the other earnestly.

"Go 'way, you fool nigger! Tell me I don't know! When you got property you got happiness, ha'n't you? Whackety—whang—whang! It's de same anyhow."

"Dat's so, Jim. But dere a'n't no gallantry ob de constitution. De gallantry—why, dat's de wimmen."

"Go 'way! I knowed you didn't know nuthin' nohow. Whacket—whang—whang! De gallantry ob de constitution, I tell you, is de obscurity ob de fundileus principles. Whackety—whang!"

"Dat's so, Jim, come to think. De pundibus principles—yes, dat's so."

Here and there in an "old field" is a pair of spectral chimneys, whose great eyes of fireplaces alow and aloft glower wrathfully at each other across the intervening heap of ashes, bickering at each other as the cause of the disaster. But most of them are rebuilt, and the Old North State has "beauty for ashes, the air of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

At the Cape Fear one of those gigantic negroes, nearly seven feet high, who are occasionally seen in North Carolina, sat in the stern of a frail punt, and wafted me over the river. He had never seen a Yankee before, and he riveted his great eyes on me, and never moved them till we touched the other bank, while he sat dipping first on this side, then on that, slowly and abstractedly, as if he were slicing invisible cheese. He did not even quench his gaze when the boat touched, and I handed him my fare, but he came to the bow, and stood looking at me till I reached the top of the bank, when his eyes reached my traveling-bag, and speech came to him again at last.

"Got anything to sell dar, boss—rings or sich like truck?"

"I am not a peddler," I replied. "I carry about with me no worldly possessions but justice and an equal mind."

"Well, 'scuse me, boss; but I thought, bein' you was a Yankee, you mout hev some sich truck."

In Jonesboro town I graduated in pine. I sat down in a little pine house, on a bare pine floor, before a bare pine table, and a rosy little woman, very communicative for a piney-woods inhabitant, gave me some capital yams, baked and mealy, and spareribs thinly fattened on pine roots. Then I sat down by a stove which was under heavy bombardment with tobacco juice from a circle of blue-nosed, yellow-faced, piney-woods men, who were discussing the price of tar and rosin. Presently one of them produced a black bottle from his pocket, and passed it around. When it reached my neighbor, he extracted it from his mouth with a clamorous "flunk," and offered it to me.

"Hev pinetop, stranger?"

But in the spareribs I had tried the pine roots, and I excused myself, not caring to become familiar with the higher branches.

In these great pineries of the coast, sometimes the golden sun, shining with a rich piney yellowness, is let right down into natural glades, gilded over with the dying broom-grass. Here, in these sheltered dells, a January noon is the finest relish of the year; amid the golden and evergreen splendors of the sunny Carolinas; the pale-green "mystic mistletoe" aloft; the tender myrtle, the cassena, and the row-palmetto alow; the Spanish moss, which bourgeons on the lustrous-leaved magnolia, or swings its soft festoons, in their delicate pearly-gray, across the purple and frosted berries of the cedar. Here, in the mellow lilac of the haze, the brooding silence of the softened winter is broken only by the swift straight whiz of some roving bee, or, perchance, occasionally by the silvery garrulity of the bobolink, that genuine Yankee, spending the winter in the South, but not for bronchitis. He babbles so fast one would think he had come down peddling.

"Notions here! Notions here! cheap—cheap—cheap!"

How these piney woods and turpentine villages swarm with those strange, little, timid, bloodless, sand-colored children, whom it makes one sad to behold! Yet they are remarkably healthy.

In one of these villages I saw a couple of incidents which illustrate negro character. A tall sallow woman came out of a house, evidently in anger, picked up a splinter, and started towards a group of children playing on the lumber. Her little girl saw a rod was in pickle, and started to run, crying, while the mother said, "Now I will whip you! I will whip you this time!" None of the white children pitied the little girl, but a colored lad caught her up, and hurried with her toward the mother, pleading, "Please don't, Mrs. Martin, let her go this time." He scudded away to the door, and so averted the catastrophe.

Next, I saw a couple of pickaninnies who had toddled down to a puddle of refuse tar, with which they smeared their little pug noses, then touched them together and pulled them apart—an operation which they accomplished with great and hilarious cackling. This same boy was sent by his mother to bring the babies; but, instead of showing the kindness he did toward the white child, he ran down and pushed them over, and the little woolly head of one of them went into the tar so deep that the boy lifted him almost perpendicular, before it was extricated.

Now, while I am in a village, I want to inquire in my most indignant tones, why, because a fellow is not afraid to pull off his coat and walk, must every pesty little groceryman in these cross-roads try to sell him maggoty cheese? Does that act constitute him an idiot, that he should be supposed to be fond of "animated nature?"

And in this country store there is inevitably a sleek, paternal-looking gentleman, hollow-cheeked and much wrinkled about the mouth, with a greasy coat, and reading a paper with spectacles. When the cheese is under discussion, and the unfortunate pedestrian is meekly objecting to it, the elderly gentleman invariably thrusts his sharp nose into the circle, examines the cheese, and protests that it is the very kind he always purchases for his family consumption, and that it is the supreme solace and consolation of his life to be permitted to masticate the same.

One day I constructed a kind of social thermometer or anthropometer, which was of great service to me in my subsequent journeyings. On a slip of paper I scaled off certain points, by regular intervals, with negro cabins for degrees. Thus, for instance, a house with no negro quarters around it was at zero, and marked "loyal." At five degrees, or cabins, the house was "doubtful;" ten, "opposed to secession, but went with his State;" twenty, "fire-eater," etc.

To particularize:—a very small log-cabin, with three dogs at the door, generally indicated a thrifty negro, freed by his own money before the war. The same kind of cabin, with two dogs, denoted a poor white man, loyal as a sheep.

At zero I dined off boiled bacon and collard greens. Our talk was about predestination, baptism by immersion, the relative excellences of salted and gammond pork, and the "d— nigger," considered as a thief and a liar. The host was drafted into the Confederate army, but "took the bush."

At two or three degrees, there would be a pile of dog-eared school books on the table, but no newspaper. The sons volunteered, to avoid the conscription, but "always shot over the Yankees' heads."

Five degrees indicated a copy of the county paper on the table, and some sad-looking rosebushes in the door-yard. The sons all enlisted early, and never shot over the Yankees' heads. When Sherman came along, he found this family "had always been good Union people," but at night their boys stuffed the soldier's pipes with disloyal substances. They had a "faithful nigger," (nearly every family had one,) but the Yankees pricked him with bayonets, to make him disclose the hiding-place of the horses.

Arrived at ten degrees, I would find a fine painted house, and a library, and the family sufficiently cultured to enable them to converse very intelligently for twenty minutes before they imparted to me the inevitable information, "Free niggers won't work." About at this point I found the Co-operationist of 1860, who was not a Secessionist pure and simple, but wanted the South to act together, whether for or against secession.

From twenty degrees upward there was splendid classical culture, plenty of silk and of silver, and lusty disloyalty, i. e., original and separate Secessionism. In return for the generous hospitality of these families, for which, especially in South Carolina, they would accept no compensation, I was obliged to listen, for the thousandth time, to the accursed truism, "The nigger is the natural inferior of the white man," and "without a master to care for him, the nigger is relapsing into hideous sensualism, and is on the high road to extinction." Nevertheless I am bound to add that, as a general rule, (though, of course, there are many exceptions,) real, substantial, bread-and-meat kindness to the freedmen increases *pari possu* with the degrees on this anthropometer. Nowhere is there more cruelty and intolerance towards the negro than at zero.

The broadest and most truthful rule in regard of the two populations of the South may be formulated in these words:—Tolerance towards the negro broadens with the planter's acres. Let a man be in such abject poverty as to own no land whatever, and he finds himself thrown in direct competition with the freedman, and hates him; let him own but sixty acres, and work with his hired negro occasionally in the field, and he already acquires towards him a kindlier feeling.

Approaching Fayetteville, I came up with an undoubted specimen of the North Carolina clay-eater. On his dray there was a single fagot of lightwood, and a small bale of peltry, and he was astride of the donkey, with his legs outside the thills, though the animal was comically small. His legs dangled down so long that he could have doubled them twice around the donkey, and on one of his callous heels he wore a mighty spur, with which he frequently digged the unhappy animal nearly on top of its back. His trowsers were slipped up to his knees, his coat was made of gunny-cloth, and out of the top of his hat projected his reddish-yellow hair. His eyes were watery, and had a kind of piggish leer. I thought I would ask him questions fast enough and directly enough to force from him a positive answer of "yes" or "no"—a thing which it is exceedingly difficult to obtain in the piney-woods—but I found he was no liripoop. After salutations I said:

"Is there any tavern on the road to Fayetteville?"

"I reckon mebbe you mout find one, ef you looked in the right place."

"This is the direct road to Fayetteville, I suppose?"

"You'll be putty apt fur to git thar, ef you keep goin' straight ahead," and he gave me a kind of low cunning leer, as if he understood already what I was attempting.

"Do you sell much wood in Fayetteville?"

"I reckon this hyur jack thinks it has to haul a right smart chance." Hereupon he took out a cake of tobacco, and a knife some eight inches long, and cut off a mouthful which he inserted far into the hollow of his cheek, performing the whole operation with such a kind of deliberateness as showed he felt bored.

"Does wood bear a good price now?"

"It's jest accordin'. Some fetches more, and some agin not so much."

"Oak fetches more than pine, I suppose?"

"Ca-an't say as it does reglar. Mout; then agin it moutn't. Green oak kinder needs a little lightwood fur to set it goin'. You got to hev both."

"I believe you Southerners burn green wood mostly?"

"Tain't perticular. Every feller to his likin'."

"Well now, my friend, pardon my impertinence; but I am writing a book on the subject of wood, and I am endeavoring to acquire some trustworthy information on the matter, as to the fiber, durability, combustibility, and other qualities of the various woods. If now you were called upon in a court of law to give your personal and unbiased opinion, you would declare upon oath, would you not, that a hundred pounds of green oak are heavier than a hundred pounds of dry pine?"

He gave me a quick glance, then he looked steadfastly at the ass' ears.

"Well now, stranger, you kin jest set down in your book, when you git to that place, that all the people of North Caroliny wos sech derned fools you hed to weigh it yerself."

Fayetteville. A genuine Southern city, with its broad, sunken, sandy streets; the inevitable rows of mulberries and China-trees; the street-lamps smashed in some lively row; the moldering damp-cracked fronts of stucco; the drowsy stir in the streets; the exquisitely beautiful, marble-white, black-eyed girls, gliding timidly along in their limp dresses; the lazy swinging wenches, with buckets of water on their turbaned heads, which they screw around so carefully and so stiffly to catch every sight; the young men, sitting sharply angular on goods-boxes along the pavements; the spavined plantation coaches, with withed axles, and harness pieced with gunny-cloth, and not nearly so oily-black as the negro atop, in his cast-off finery, a gorgeous silk hat, breastpins galore, and white grocery twine in his shoes, smirking and grimacing to every dark woman on the street, as he drives along.

One day I came upon a very old man, sitting prone on the ground, shaving shingles. Singularly enough for a piney-woods man, he was rather communicative, and we discoursed on various matters. At last he asked me about the public debt, and I set it forth to him in all its imposing roundness of millions and billions, but it appeared to make no adequate impression, for he only looked blank and said nothing. Then I wrote it out on a shingle, and gave it to him to contemplate. He took it, turned it wrong side up, regarded it vacantly for a time, as if in profound cogitation of its greatness, then carefully laid it down, bottom side up, and commenced shaving again, without uttering a word. Presently he stopped again, and asked:

"What mout rosom be wuth in Raleigh?"

"Really, I can't say. I didn't read the market reports before I started."

A gleam of triumph brightened his face as he glanced quickly at me.

"Well now, 'scuse me stranger; but 'pears like it's rather singular. Come all the way down from Raleigh, and don't know what rosom are wuth."

The old man had his revenge. He knew that I knew that he could not read, and had endeavored to turn the tables.

The Old North State is not in repute for hospitality. If I was belated at night, and saw the glimmer of a roaring fire through the chinks of a piney-woods cabin, I sighed inwardly at my approaching tribulation. First, there would be the villainous hounds, fiercely intent on fleshing their tusks in my legs, and then the geese would set up a diabolical squalling and clapperclawing. Still nobody would come to the door.

Rap, rap, rap!

"Who's thar?"

Then I would extemporize an animated biography of myself, sandwiching in the chapters thereof between the flurries of yelps, and kicking desperately right and left the while, to prevent the brutes from tearing away the tails of my coat. At last there would be a low consultation on the inside, then the man would shuffle to the door, open it cautiously, and, standing behind it, stick his head out, and look. Seeing I was not armed, he would let me come inside. There would be eight or ten whitish-clad, whitish-faced people around the hearth, some of them smoking, some sucking the snuff-swab, the rest doing nothing. Finding out at last who I was, they sometimes seemed to be a little ashamed, and explained that their extreme cautiousness was learned towards the end of the war; and, in consideration of the ruffian horrors of which they told me, I was disposed to be charitable.

The people of the South, especially of such old steady going communities as North Carolina, are far more religious, if often only formally, than we of the North. They seem to feel almost universally, chastened by the great and terrible war. The very lowest classes, as for instance those who subsist chiefly by renting turpentine trees, gave feeble religious manifestations, but I seldom stopped with a planter or even with the humblest farmer, where grace was not pronounced at table, though it was frequently done in a painfully flippant and formal manner.

Dr. John W. Draper, suckled on the materialism of Buckle and Comte, in his History of the American Civil War, says the climate of the South "promoted a sentiment of independence in the person, and of State Rights in the community." In the Thoughts on American Civil Policy, he says again of the South, "More volative than reflective, it can never have a constant love for a fixed constitution." On the contrary, the South is notably old-fashioned in everything;—in legislation, in dress, in worship, in forms of speech. Simply because it is "more volatile than reflective," and therefore not introspective and inventive, it is content to slip along in the ancient grooves. Note such quaint Cethegan uses as, "holp," "love" for "like," "for to" with the infinitive, "drug" for "dragged," etc. The ladies dresses are at least a year behind the fashions of the North. Go into the churches, even in the largest metropolitan cities, and you will be impressed with the quaint and simple antiquity of certain usages, such as that of standing in prayer, of lining out the hymn, etc. And it must be confessed, if a man has any heart of old-fashioned honesty in him, he often finds himself making comparisons very unfavorable to many of our flippant Northern innovations.

Yet there is some sprinkling of truth, in Dr. Draper's ponderous disquisitions, and there is some subtile analogy between men and trees. Lucretius seems to have felt some vague apprehension of this, and every classical reader will remember the famous trees of the Hellespont, which Pliny fancifully says grieved for the death of Protesilaus.

The typical piney-woods man is tall and gaunt, like the pines; sunken-breasted; hair coarse and Jacksonian; fingers bony and long. As his frosty gray eyes are the farthest remove from the pale dreamy eyes of the cypress-breeding Orient, so is his voice a great way removed from the Oriental softness, because it is resined too harsh. Persian Hafiz compares the soft articulation of his verses to a string of pearls, and Homer likens the speech of Pylian Nestor to falling snow, but what was the voice of Carolinian Benton, roaring in the Senate? The piney-woods face has none of the generous roundness and curves of beauty of the oak-leaf, but the hard sharp lines of the pine-leaf. Wodsworth says of little Lucy:—

> "And she shall lean her ear
> In many a secret place,
> Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
> And beauty born of murmuring sound
> Shall pass into her face."

Whence, then, the hardness of face and of soul of the piney-woods man, but from the cold sour roar of his solemn pineries?

The remark of Ruskin, as to the traditional valor of the dwellers in the piney-woods, applies to the mountaineers, but scarcely to the representative piney-woods character of the Atlantic coast. The piney-woods have, indeed, given to the Republic its greatest captain (Jackson,) but the names of Johnson, Vance, Bragg, Polk and Holden are coupled with little else but disaster. The record of military desertions in North Carolina is more disgraceful than that of any other State, either North or South.

How superior the women of the South are to their brothers! Whatever my opinion may be of the latter, for the former, considering the domestic and literary education they received, I have the most profound respect.

My last dinner in North Carolina was eaten in a thrifty farm-house, and, after it was ended, I offered the host a piece of currency. He refused it—the one solitary instance when my money was refused in the Old North State. I saw he was not a man to be offended by the offer, so I urged it upon him, and while we were talking, his little wife stood looking at us through the door. At last she could no longer restrain herself. Laughing a little, but with her wonderfully black eyes glittering in a way which was suggestive of an immense amount of latent fire, she said to me:—

"You ought to have offered it to me. You Yankees never conquered no woman."

CHAPTER III.

AMONG THE RICE-EATERS.

ONE afternoon, after wading through an immeasurable contiguity of naked sand, set with scraggy oak shrubs, I came to a planter's house on firm ground. It was white and somewhat pretentious, with the chimneys outside, but nothing about it except some out-houses of logs. We had fine collards and sweet potatoes for dinner, but I saw the planter take boiled rice on his plate, and eat it heartily without condiments, and then I knew I was in South Carolina.

The planter was a little man, with a grim, gristly face, a basilisk eye, and a snow-white poll. He quoted Carlyle wildly, and there was in his tone a bitterness which at times was almost fierce.

"The nigger, sir, is a savage whom the Almighty Maker appointed to be a slave. A savage, sir, a savage! With him free the South is ruined, sir, ruined. But we bide our time. 'Aye! to-day'—how is that? to-day, to-day—yes, so—

> 'Aye! to-day
> Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze
> That flashes desolation, strong the arm
> That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes!'

Ah—a—a, 'to-morrow comes!' Our people treasure in their deepest hearts a bitter galling wrong; and if this generation, and the next, and the next, pass into the realm of black forgetfulness, still the sacred heritage of revenge will be transmitted unimpaired from sire to son, even to the last syllable of recorded time."

I thought it best to let him run down, like a new-wound clock, so I paid respectful attention and said nothing.

"Never, sir, depend on it, will any high-toned Southron consent to remain any longer than brute force compels him in a Union controlled by the nutmeg-eyed, muslin-faced Yankees who now control it. Live in an alliance with pump-handle-makers and cheese-pressers! Honor is dearer to every Southron than the ruddy drops that visit our sad hearts, but what is honor to men whose gods are the goods with which they juggle us, and whose idolatry is the art of making the two ends meet? The winds which blow from whatever quarter of heaven over the broken and bloody battlements of the South kiss no more the waving folds of the 'Bonnie Blue Flag,' and in its stead there flutters in the breeze an alien banner, planted by foreign hands; but so long as there remains a mother, a wife, a sister, to turn an imploring eye upward to the God of the injured and the innocent, so long as there lives beneath the sun, whether in this or in foreign climes, one of her wandering and unhappy sons, in whose veins the blood leaps hot at the mention of the accursed thing, so long shall the South wait with confidence the coming time which shall bring in her revenges. 'For Freedom's battle once begun'—you know the rest."

"You present certain points of the Northern character forcibly, but do you think you do justice to them as a people?"

The mere sound of my voice seemed to wind him up again to the top of his bent.

"Justice!—It is nothing, sir, it is nothing! If you believe them, they are the elected overseers of the solar system. If you believe the abolition papers, they can not only deliver more eloquent orations than Tully, but make shirts faster than Nessus. They can indite pleasanter eclogues than Virgil, sounder treatises on the quinsy than Hippocrates, and more profound logic than Aristotle. They can shoulder bigger oxen than Milo, and sew canvas faster than St. Paul. They can extract more canned apple-sauce from sawdust than Dr. Faustus, reconstruct from their ashes more primordial gimcracks than the medieval alchemists, and twist more lightning from the clouds than the loftiest pine tree in the State of South Carolina."

"Ha! ha! ha! I see I shall never persuade you to believe any good can come out of Nazareth. But it is late in the afternoon, and I must walk."

One of my last days in North Carolina was occupied chiefly in wading through shallow swamps, and in balancing over the widest on foot-logs, from which one is moderately certain to slip off in the deepest places. On one of these, a very long one, I met a good deal of rural beauty in green calico, and she was very obliging, and would not drive me all the way back to the other end, but showed me the fashion of the country in these matters. I took her by the arms and swung her round, as in a waltz, but the operation was not skillfully performed, and we both fell into the water, on opposite sides of the log.

But, once over the Little Pedee, I emerged suddenly into a country of noble and immense plantations, where King Cotton's hair, like poor old Lear's, still thinly shook in the winds of winter. "Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks" at him; he is king no more. It was a tiny snowstorm, caught and pinioned in the manner.

Here, every mile or so, is a cotton-gin, with its rumbling bowels of machinery, stilted high upon posts. Beneath it is the sweep, and a little pickaninny mopes round after the mule, holding his tail, and smiting his hams. Hard by is the press, with its umbrella of roof, and its huge sweep, like a carpenter's opened compass, straddling down to the ground, and its parasol of roof above the umbrella. How it yells with the fiendish delight of a gorilla, as it squeezes the bale tighter and tighter in its wooden hug.

"You make a prodigious screeching, uncle."

"Well, yer can't get along much in dis world, boss, 'less yer does yer own screechin'," said Sambo, picking the shredded cotton out of his wool.

In North Carolina blacksmithing, coöpery, and other sorts of horny-handed industry, were in noisy blast along the wayside. In South Carolina all this vulgar buzz and clatter of greasy mechanics was mellowed down into the genteel whisper of molasses in the country store.

In the Old North State a white man would grub, or rake grass and leaves into the fence-corners for compost—how handy those ugly fence corners are, after all!—and white and black chopped together on opposite sides of a pine. In the Palmetto State the land-owners sat in the country stores, "chopping straws and calling it politics;" while ragged land-workers strolled in legions in the road, "looking for a job." "Job" here means a bottle of molasses and a box of paper collars, in some industrious negro's trunk.

In North Carolina the farmer's humble house stands close by the road, and the narrow yard accommodates the hounds, the geese, all the paraphernalia of the farm, and two switched and haggled rosebushes. A worm fence, which you can contemptuously straddle over, with both feet touching the ground, keeps the wood-yard out in the road. In South Carolina the planter's stately abode stands haughtily aloof, fenced with thorn or cedar hedge, and deeply embowered in pine, and orange, and holly, and the pretty loblolly-bay. At evening, as I passed, sometimes there came down to me from the far veranda, floating, flying, trilling through those cones and braids of tender green, the sad, soft music of the mourning South.

But the sweetest strains of Munich lyre or lute of Cremona could not drown the noisy footfalls of Poverty, as he stalked in his discontent through those carpetless halls. On many a sad field beside the Potomac or the Rapidan, those missing carpets were mouldering into earth, where the houseless soldier slept in them his last sleep.

The step of the North Carolinian, too, was loud upon his rattling floors, but it fell upon accustomed ears. To him who was more delicately bred it was an unwonted sound; and I have sometimes fancied I could see a lonely father start at the ghostly echo of his own tread, as if it brought back to him the loved image of his gallant boy, who went down in the great slaughter.

Ah! those naked floors of South Carolina! Their sad and lonesome sound echoes in my memory still.

I staid one night with a young man, whose family were away, leaving him all alone in a great mansion. He had been a cavalry sergeant, wore his hat on the side of his head, and had an exceedingly confidential manner.

"You see, sir, the Tar-heels haven't no sense to spare. Down there in the pines the sun don't more'n half bake their heads. We always had to show 'em whar the Yankees was, or they'd charge to the rear, the wrong way, you see. They haven't no more sense than to work in the field, just like a nigger. If you work with a nigger, he despises you for equalizin' yourself with him, you see, and you can't control him. The Tar-heels never could control but two or three apiece."

He left off his wild and rambling gestures for a moment, and raked two more yams out of the ashes, which we peeled, holding them in our fingers.

"But any man is a dog-oned fool to work, when he can make a nigger work for him. If a man works, he sweats, and gets stiff, and can't dance, you see. He's a d— fool. What's that? O, but we can get niggers to work for us.

No high-toned gentleman is goin' to work. Whether we can get niggers or not, I tell you, sir, no gentleman is goin' to degrade himself to work."

With this he leaned far over toward me, in a very confidential way, and rapped with the end of his knife a dozen times on the table.

Oh! yes, that was it, sergeant. In North Carolina every tub stood on its own bottom, and every head on its own shoulders, even if they were black; but in South Carolina emancipation took off every negro's head, and every white man's arms. One knew well enough how to work through another, and the other well enough how to work for another; but there was nobody, as in the Old North State, who had learned how to work for himself.

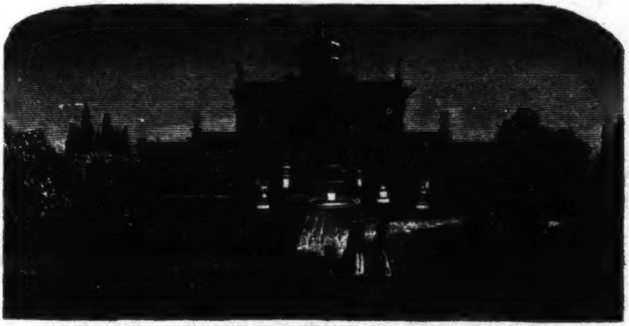
Thus it was, when the gusty days of rebellion, and the awful typhoons of battles swept over her, and her princely planters, in the days of their bitter need, saw their cotton turn to paper, and their paper to dingy rags, and their dingy rags to ashes, that proud South Carolina was wrecked with such appalling ruin. It was not alone the blood of their best sons, the ashes of their pleasant mansions, their gold, their cotton, their jewels, and their slaves, but even labor itself, the very base and beginning of existence, was swept away in that wild tempest.

Night overtook me as I was passing one of these lordly mansions, and I went in to seek for lodgings. There was a great silence over everything, and my step rang loud and lonely in the great veranda. A negro girl answered the bell, but straightway there swept down upon me a classically beautiful, black-eyed woman, in deep mourning, who seemed anxious to forestall the girl.

"Can I get lodgings here to-night, madam?"

"No, sir; we never keep peddlers."

Poor woman! I learned at the next house the cause of her testiness, and in an instant all my resentment vanished.



A SOUTHERN MANSION.

A HOME IN RUINS.

Her beloved and only daughter had just borne a negro babe.

Having my curiosity piqued by this case, I afterward made diligent inquiry all the way across the South, and I will give the result for the benefit of those whose days and nights are rendered wretched by fear of amalgamation. I never found but this one instance in high life, or even in respectable life. In those districts of South Carolina where the black population was densest, and the poor whites, by consequence, most degraded, these unnatural unions were more frequent than anywhere else. In every case, without exception, it was a woman of the lowest class, generally a "sand-hiller," who, having lost in the war her only supporter, "took up with a likely nigger" to save her children from absolute famine. In South Carolina I found six cases of such marriages, but never more than one in any other State.

Down near the Santee I staid with a planter who said he had owned over a hundred negroes, and every indication corroborated his assertion. He was a little old man, with a wonderfully high standing collar, and gold-bowed spectacles. His wife was an invalid, and his only servant was an awkward wench, a former field-hand; so he presently left me alone in the great carpetless room, and mysteriously vanished. At supper he poured the coffee, and I strongly suspect he made it himself.

Next morning it gave me much pleasure to pay him a dollar, for he had earned it personally, and was, moreover, struggling to "accept the situation" in a manner that was worthy of encouragement. He snatched it out of my hand, as if he despised both it and himself. With an almost fierce glitter in his eye, he said:—

"I expect to see the day, sir, when I can exchange my bluebacks for greenbacks, dollar for dollar; and I have a roll of $100,000 laid away for that purpose."

Can it be, I wondered, that—

> "Grave men there are by broad Santee,
> Grave men with hoary hairs,"

to whom the Government of this our great Republic still seems so utter a farce as that?

Between Florence and Charleston there are dismal belts of piney woods. In one of these I talked with a poor yellow "sand-hiller," who was shivering so with ague that he could scarcely keep the pipe in his mouth. He told me the astonishing fact that he did not hear of the first capture of Sumpter till three months after its occurrence. Speaking of one of his rich neighbors, he said:—

"He swore he could drink all the blood as would be spilled in the war; but long befo' Sharman come his oldest gal was a ploughin' corn with the bull, and his wife a bobbin' fur catfish in a cypress swamp."

Be it known to the reader that to seek catfish in a cypress swamp betrays great inexperience; and it amused the poor man so much, despite his ague, that he almost shook himself out of his chair.

The live-oaks gradually thickened among the pines, as I approached Charleston, which I did not enter till after nightfall. I rose early next morning, and went down to the end of the narrow tongue of land which is thrust down between the Ashley and the Cooper. Sitting on the low drab-colored walls of the Battery, I watched the sun make pleasant summer around the head of Sumter, then all along the low, dark, piney walls of the harbor. Not a sail was spread in the idle air, and only a single long wherry sped lightly over the steel-gray waters, carrying a bone in its mouth. The birth-place of the great rebellion still slumbered in the deep sluggard languor of Southern cities on a winter morning.

Away down the harbor, broken and blackened by the lightnings of the ships, standing haughtily aloof from the beach, like a discrowned king still spurning the touch of the swinish multitude, Sumter sullenly glooms above the waters. Over against it is Moultrie, buttressing its vast strength upon the coast, and glowering through its stony eyes upon the bay with a hard unwinking stare. Grim twins are they! terrible eye-teeth in this whilom jaw of Disunion!

Back among the ruins of the great burnt district I found two or three negroes poking and grubbing in the crumbled walls; also a white man, who gave me the following reminiscence of the heated times of secession:—

"Sam, wha' fur de white folks secedin'?"

"Go 'long, you fool nigger! Dey aint secedin', dey's exceedin'."

"Wha' fur dey exceedin', den?"

"Oh, you don't know nuthin', nohow. De white folks got rights, haint dey? Well, den, when dey go out ob de Union to git deir rights, dat's concedin'."

"But when dey go out ob de Union to git deir rights, and gits whaled, what's dat?"

"Why dat—dat 'ar"—scratching his wool—"you fool nigger, dat's secedin'."

Charleston was a city, first, of idle ragged negroes, who, with no visible means of support nevertheless sent an astonishing multitude of children to school; second, of small dealers, laborers, and German artisans, starving on the rebel custom; third, of widows and children of planters, keeping respectable boarding-houses, or pining in hopeless and unspeakable penury; fourth, of young men loafing in the saloons, and living on the profits of their mother's boarding-houses; fifth, of Jews and Massachusetts merchants, doing well on the semi-loyal and negro custom; sixth, of utterly worthless and accursed political adventurers from the North, Bureau leeches, and promiscuous knaves, all fattening on the humiliation of the South and the credulity of the freedmen.

Let us, in fancy, ascend in a shallop the Edisto or the Pacatalico, and behold a landscape passing all the beauty of florid Cole or tropic Church. It shall be in the spring, before the swamp malaria—more deadly than the breath of the bohun upas—has banished the whites to the uplands; and while there are plenty of lilies waltzing and winking above the waves.

In the foreground of the lagoon the green lush waves of the rice chase each other in languid softness, and white-clad laborers bow themselves to their toil between the rows, or punt and paddle their clumsy bateaux along the ditches. The idiotic brutishness which sits on the faces of these poor rice-eaters, and their grunting, gutteral, sea-island patois, might make you believe yourself on the deadly shores of the Senegal. Far across the rice-field, where it swells like a long Atlantic wave to meet the upland, the planter's mansion towers white above its groves of tender green, now sprinkled over with a mellow orange snow of blossoms. Beyond and higher up the grand old pines hold up their arms toward the soft blue sky, and swear by the beautiful sun that no evil shall ever befall this earthly Paradise.

We disembark. The mansion is girt about on three sides with a deep and breezy veranda, "rose-wreathed, vine-encircled," through whose leafy trellises sleepily sift all day, into open windows, odors of a mellow and languishing sweetness, and at night the coolness of the briny sea. Ten thousand butterflies and humming-birds, tricked in their brilliant gauds, and house-keeping bees, more plain in attire, flutter endlessly over the painted flowers, every one of which is pumped a hundred times a day.

We stroll down curving alleys, between the dainty privet hedges, which are here allowed to shoot into a graceful cone, and there to arch above a gateway which invites us to enter. We wander on and on, through another and another, by many a luring pathway, among acres of roses, and shady bowers, and unnamed geometric tricks of—

> "Damask-work, and deep inlay
> Of braided blooms,"

gay with brilliant lily-like amaryllis, and white and orange woodbines, and pittosporum, with its soft-green, honey-edged leaves. Here, the columnar palmetto shakes its sword-tipped vanes in the breeze with a cool whispering rustle; there, the golden lotus its crest with a dreamy murmur; yonder, the banana its giant leaves with many a lazy unwieldy flap. Hard by, the century-plant heaves its huge club-leaves, gray with the lapse of forgotten winters—an ancient anchorite, living on its austere and monkish life fourscore years among all these trooping and splendid generations, which come and go as the dews of the morning. The orange, like a true daughter of the South, weaves a little tender green embroidery for its last year's gown, and thinks, what with its ornaments of native gold, it will do for another year. A bevy of golden-haired wood-nymphs roll the plate, or play at the mystic Druidical game of the South—Honon, Cronon, Thealogos—beneath the ancestral live-oaks, which wag their old gray beards of moss with pleasant laughter at the gay sports below.

> "Merry sulthe it is in the halle,
> When the beards waveth alle."

What is that picture now?

The magnificent avenue of live-oaks, if the ruthless tomahawk of the war has spared so much, with their hoary beards, like Barbarossa's in the cave, sweeping and swaying in the mournful breeze, conduct through a rank and noxious jungle of weeds to a heap of ashes. The two blackened chimneys, like lonely unpropitiated ghosts of this once happy home, stand bleakly alone near the cabins of the blacks, as if to summon them to vengeance. But they summon all in vain, whether the freedmen to vengeance, or the master to return. Far off beside the Rapidan or James he slumbers in his forgotten grave, which many a summer's sun has covered over with grassy thatch, and his dull ear is not more insensible to the wail of his houseless orphans than is the happy freedman to solicitations for his revenge.

The sounds of joyous music, melodious as the echoes of the Mæonian song, and the sweet trill of childish laughter, float no more through the orange groves on the wings of the evening breeze; but all the air holds a tepid and sickly stillness, which quivers now and then with a wintry ripple. The hedges are wrenched and wrung into hideous shapelessness, and all the pride and the glory of the gardens is eaten by hungry mules. The waters of the swamps flap and swash unhindered through the broken mains, while loathsome sirens and turtles crawl among the rasping sedges and the slimy pools. Acres upon acres of abandoned rice-swamps are dun with weeds, or black with rotting and reeking lilies, and dark with pestilence and death.

The widow and her orphans—ah, where are they?

Happy for them if they, too, sleep in the quiet grave, where the brutal pillaging and rage of contending armies terrify no more.

In the grocery it is you must look for the rising statesmen. You shall find them in a circle, with their long lank hair, unsunned faces, and easy, flippant, laughing manner, comparing notes on the doings of their respective, thieving, lying freedmen, and narrating histories of their regiments.

The typical man of the State is the great rice or cotton planter, like him I talked with in Marion. Haughty, irascible, but prodigally hospitable and sunny to his friends, he has a type close at hand in his cotton-bolls, which, when they are touched by the frost, straightway so swell with rage that they burst their garments.

Yet there is a strange sombreness in the South Carolinian mind. Let the reader recall the Biblical studies of Allston, the grim and ruthless logic of Calhoun, and the absence of humor in the novels of Simms. They were the Puritans of the South. In their very refinement there was an alkalinity which withered the nonconformist. We cannot forget that Puritan and Cavalier were both Englishmen, and that, if one used a fanaticism of religion, the other used a fanaticism of gentility.

But, alas for South Carolina, the current generation of this close-bred, martial, alkaline race is almost extinct. Choleric old rice-planters, with cottony polls, I saw; classically molded, pale, saddened, but heroic women, and exquisitely beautiful girls, I saw in Charleston, all in mourning weeds; but the youths, who should continue the intense but erring vigor of South Carolina in another generation —where were they?

Never can I forget that miserable walk from Charleston to Savannah; drenched with ceaseless rains; wading in endless swamps; twisting myself in the most unseemly monkey-jumps, to keep on the foot-logs; scared at night by the awful thunders, which cracked right overhead in the vast and lonely forest, and the lightnings splitting in the swash of the rain. But the ghastly ruin, and the silence of death were more terrible than all beside. Between the two cities there were only two planter's houses, both built after the war.

There are white men who can live in these swamps through the summer, as overseers, and I staid with one such, who may be taken as a representative of his class. He lived in the edge of the piney-woods, where they joined the swamp, in a cabin a little larger than the negro quarters about it, with two rooms, but not ceiled or wainscoted. We bivouacked sheer on the floor, where the wind swooped and howled down upon us through the open gables.

His cook was a rice negro, decently clad in plantation cloth, but of the most hideous Guinea physiognomy. He talked volubly with the overseer about a love affair, told him how another negro had come between him and his soul's beloved, Eliza, and how, by beating him soundly, he won Eliza who was at first favorable to the other. He acted out the whole proceeding with graphic gestures, and his eyes would roll at times with a wild and idiotic glare which made me feel uncomfortable. What a specimen of savage energy for a man who ate absolutely nothing but rice!

As in the Old North State, no son of the piney-woods ever refused my money for his victuals, but the hospitality of the overseer and middle planters class was green and unwithering as their palmetto. A poor North Carolinian woman—and she was ardently loyal, too—spoke to me in such glowing words of the large Marion planters as made me a pleasant surprise. One year of the war there was no maize in her state, and she, like many of her neighbors, put money in her sacks, and victuals for the way, and went down, like the sons of Jacob into Egypt.

"Three times I had to go," she said, "and nary time would they take my money. They allus give me all the corn my hoss could pack, and wunst cold victuals to last me back agin."

During the war South Carolina committed two egregious offenses against the Castor and Pollux of the South, Virginia and Georgia; first, in killing Stonewall Jackson by mistake; second, in refusing to send militia over to assist the Georgians in making head against Sherman. Hence it was greatly the mode, particularly in Georgia, to say bitter things of the little sister, as being the author but not the finisher of the secession. Some of the upland regiments, like the North Carolinians, had too much earth in their brains to war well; but the luxurious and hair-brained sons of the lowland planters, standing on the perilous edge of battle, taught America to fight.

Not one whit do I detract from the noble, the sublime constancy of the Union armies by insisting that for straight fighting in the field, for brilliant and daring charges, the rebels had no equals on the continent. As my patriotism hates rebellion, so does my soul despise that littleness which would deny to a fallen adversary one tittle of his deservings.

But after the battle—then is the test of greatness. Then order and continuity conquer. The women of the South were greater before the battle, but their Northern sisters were greater after.

CHAPTER IV.

OVER THE RED HILLS.

A little gentleman, once a Major on Beauregard's staff, gave me the best description of Savannah that I have seen. "Savannah," said he "is a very elegant and retired country residence, which a very absurd railroad is trying to make into a cotton warehouse." This agrees also with N. P. Willis, who calls Savannah the City of Shade and Silence.

The thing which seemed to me most curious was to see such prodigious quantities of cotton whisked about beneath a shadow so gloomy and so cemeterial. But this is only along the quays. The vast and sombre evergreen oaks roof in all the streets alike; but farther back the cushioning sand stills the noise of the few carriages into a ghostly silence, and only now and then a pale woman, stricken and mourning, but proud as a Roman, glides blackly along like a spectre.

The principal street is like the "long-drawn aisle" of a cathedral, stretching away beneath a superb groined arch of old oaks, in which the marble statues in the middle of the street stand like silent worshipers. High overhead, in the mellow lamplight, sweeps and sways the long gray moss, as if it knew the secrets of primeval years, and were nodding and whispering mysteriously about them. Far out in the unpeopled darkness of the park, I sat a while beneath the solemn shadow of the pines, and as I looked out through their dark tops, slowly rocking against the stars, in the sweet and soothing quietness of that hour I seemed to hear no longer a cold roar, as in the Old North State, but rather—

> "The still sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue."

Savannah was even more crammed than Charleston with plantation negroes, who were thumped and banged by citizen and soldier alike. All along my route the freedmen were drifting, wave upon wave, driven by a fatal destiny toward the coast, the region of malaria, semi-idiocy, death.

One day I went down in a fishing-smack to take a final and formal leave of the ocean. A raw and gusty wind hustled our little craft bowling cherrily down the bloody Savannah; and as we returned, now dodging this way, now that, among the green islets of rushes, I looked back over my shoulder, and bade a chattering, shivering farewell to the Atlantic.

Next day the capricious calendar of Savannah whisked us in a fair day, and I wound up my resolution for the Pacific. Now, said I, Laucelot Gabbo, use your legs.

The first evening out of the city I stopped at a great wooden house, with half of the veranda floor rotted away, rags in the windows, and not a carpet in the house. A little, green-eyed, sharp-nosed, wrinkled old woman presided at supper, and just as I was sitting down on the end of the long bench, I let out the unlucky secret that I was from the North. On the instant she set down the coffee-pot, and, standing right over me, began:—

"O, you're a Yankee, be ye? You're one of them Yankees! Well, I haint got no sympathy with ye. A Yankee, be ye? Well, I haint seen a Yankee now goin' on three year, and I've got mighty full of bad feelings, but I never thought I'd ever see one of 'em in *my* house, so as I could jest tell him what I think. O, them beasts! That was some of your Yankees, it was, done that! Tuk my pots and busted 'em up—pure ugliness, it wos—and tuk my new cullender, that wasn't no use to 'em on the face of the livin' yearth, and punched holes into it with nails, they did, jest in pure ugliness. Destructed every last thing we had on the face of the livin' yearth! And then jest to think of 'em, their black nigger soldiers fur to stop a poor woman on the road, jest gwine to Savannah with some eggs fur to buy dishes agin; and make me stand four hours in the hot sunshine, with the big, greasy corporal a settin' in a chair, and me a standin' up! O, them beasts! but they wouldn't have done it, for niggers was larnt better manners, but them Yankees put 'em up to it."

And so forth, for at least ten minutes, before she stopped for breath. Munching meekly away, I had nearly finished all I could stand of the burnt pone and the beefsteak fried in grease, before the tempest subsided. At last she sat down, apparently amazed at my quietness; but her wrath had expended itself like a wind which strikes no wall. I had to listen to plenty of these histories yet, but by hearing her through, I made her one of my most devoted friends.

Ninety miles I followed the railroad in its dismal track along the Ogeechee. How nice and convenient it is to have the stations just ten miles apart. Are these grimy, gray, pig-rooted villages, dropped down into augur-holes in these owl-inhabited piney-woods, the great Empire State? I wondered. No, it is only her brachial artery, running down ninety miles to her right-hand Savannah. These mighty cotton-trains, snorting and yelling, like a caravan of white elephants, twelve times a day through this miserable wilderness—these are the pulsations of Georgia's big heart of hills.

This led me up from the endless, dreary level of the coast, into the red and rolling hills. Down on the weary flats of South Carolina the Juggernaut car of the slave-lords crushed the masses utterly; but up among these good red hills of Georgia there lived many a ruddy farmer, above whose head its wheels rolled high and harmless.

Herein was the reason why the heart of Savannah was not so utterly eaten out by the war as was that of unhappy Charleston. It drew replenishment from a sounder middle class in the back country.

An old negro, ploughing on a hill, stopped his mule and came down to ask the time of day. It was only a pretense for talk, which I found would last till night, if I were only willing. Pointing to his furrows, I said:—

"Uncle, you must have made those after dark, they are so crooked."

"O," said he, laughing immoderately, "nebber see dem ofo'? Ya! ya! ya! Dirt all run down hill, sah, ya! ya! ef you ploughs straight down hill."

Georgia approaches much nearer to Yankee thriftiness than does South Carolina—uses more industry. In both the Carolinas I saw not one sawmill, but here there were many, whizzing and whistling among odorous mountains of lumber, and sending up their long diminuendo groans.

When I passed through Macon, it was undoubtedly the blackest city in the Union. As houseflies gather in the warm eastern casement on a winter morning, thaw their frosted thighs, chafe and scrape their toes on their wings till they are limber, then essay little jumps across a pane, so keeping up a cheerful buzz till noon, when they migrate to the western windows, so did the negroes in the streets, *vice versa.*

"What time is it?" I heard one citizen ask of another, soon after I arrived.

Without looking at his watch, he pointed to the dusky multitude on the east side of the street, and said "I see they have moved across; it must be about one o'clock."

They were all "waiting to be hired;" yet the rascals were most effectually giving the lie to any stories of starvation by their oily, sooty faces, for the negro quickly shows "the mettle of his pasture," by turning ashen when thinly fed. You could easily tell the plantation hands from the original Macon negroes, for the former lay in lazy torpor all along the pavements choking the passage, while the latter would gather in knots about the lamp-posts, and now and then a guffaw would explode in the midst, and nearly throw them all over backward. What an immeasurable blossom of grins can grow on the face of your jolly African!

Macon is a clean, and pretty, and airy city, of bright colors, and broad streets, and plenty of sunshine. You seldom see any "crackers," as in Atlanta. The faces are ruddier and heartier than in Savannah, and the people not so stiff and grim, but more humorsome, and less harsh and rigorous toward the negroes. Said a gay and dapper little reporter to me:—

"A Yankee can marry $100,000 in Macon, but he can't marry $50,000 in Savannah."

It is as notable for its mulberries as Savannah for its oaks. With knarled, and ridged, and warty trunks, scarred with chaps and chinks of every idler's blade—for whittling is scarcely less a part of a Georgian than of a Nantucket education—they stand in rows along the sunken streets, and mercifully shade the fiery sand in summer.

Between Macon and its counterpart Columbus, there stretches a great plateau, of a dark-red soil, very deep and fertile. In all this noble country I did not see a fortieth part of the negroes I saw in Macon alone. A few were at work in the cotton-fields, drowsily thwacking down the cotton-stalks for the spring ploughing.

I walked awhile with a freedman and his wife, who were taking a journey of fifty miles to see a Bureau agent.

They providently carried their victuals for the journey, whereat I wondered; but I found they had learned such prudence in North Carolina. He was a taciturn, hard-headed, resolute negro, and was going in quest of justice, a thing hard for a freedman to find in the South—far harder to find than pity. He told his story laconically:—

"You see, sah, I raised cotton with Dr. Majors on sheers one-quarter an' found. When it come to dividin', he tried to pumfoozle me 'bout de figgerin', an' let on as if I'd eat up all my sheer in de 'visions he sole me. I wasn't gwine to be pumfoozled no sich way, sah, so I jest straddled de bales, but he got de Sheriff, and drug me off, and tuk de cotton."

"Some of the negroes do eat up all their share by the time the cotton is picked, don't they?"

"Some does. Dey don't know nothin' 'bout figgerin', an' runs in debt for mo' 'n their sheer, an' then growls when they takes it away. But I done no sich way."

"Do the planters give you a plenty of bacon?"

"No, sah; dey don't give a nigger nuff to grease his mouf aroun' de outside, let alone de inside." Then looking at my traveling-bag, he said "haint got nothin to drink dah, boss?"

"Not a drop. Now that you are free, I suppose nobody gives you anything but what you work for?"

"No, sah; and don't git all dat."

I really wished that I had something, that I might cause to shine around him, for once at least, the "light of other days."

It is a strange fact that, in the universally tippling South, I have never seen a negro drunk. They may have been in the days of slavery, but as freedmen they are sober, though it is often because they have no money.

In Columbus I saw my freedman again, and he cursed the Bureau agent bitterly.

"Wouldn't lift a finger, sah, 'less I give him fifteen dollars fust."

As the representative Georgian, let us visit Captain Xerxes Podalirius Truhitt. He shall be about a twenty bale planter, employing three or four freedmen, with whom his sons occasionally labor in the fields, in shirt-sleeves. As I approach his house, several sad-eyed hounds, with ears that sweep away the morning dew, come tumbling over the rail-fence, with long melancholy cries. A woman comes to the door, with a pipe in her mouth, and with much shrill clamor drowns the sweet music of the hounds.

The Georgia farmer's house is of an invariable pattern, wooden and paintless, somewhat longish, and with two flat wing-roofs, one of which covers the "piazza," parallel with the road. This contains the spinning-wheel, saddles and bridles, and a water shelf, on which there are two cedar buckets with shining brass hoops, and a long-handled gourd, bound around the rim with linen.

The body of the house contains two rooms; there are twin bed-rooms under the rear wing-roof, and one of them has the "spare-bed," covered with a quilt on which there are sundry crooked-necked gourds depicted. There is an immense bed of feathers. Ah me! how often, after eating salt pork, I have smacked my dry lips, and lain thrust down into the feathers in the shape of an ox-bow, with my head pointing up toward heaven, and my heels also.

They always cook and eat in a log-cabin behind the house, as if it were an operation they were ashamed of. Here are pots and kettles, sooty and innumerable. There is one long clothless table, with a bench on either side, on which the numerous little cotton-heads range themselves.

We sit by to supper. A frowzy ragged wench shuffles drowsily about, handing coffee.

"Have fry on your plate," says the host, shoving toward me a platter of leathery bacon.

"Have hominy."

He always speaks as if commanding you, and omits the partitive *some*. The wench awkwardly thrusts a cup of coffee over my shoulder. The mistress takes one of the pones and breaks it up small—cuts it never.

"Have bread."

In the centre of the table there is a saucer of pale, sickly-looking butter, smoothly rounded up, but without a single crease or dimple tasty women know so well how to imprint. The younger children often look wistfully at it, and then at the mother, but are repressed by a frown. I probe it gently once, but do it no more. It is a mistake, I find. Its uses are purely ornamental. Next morning it appears again, marred with that solitary gash—that unkind cut.

Toward the end of the meal a thin pone comes hot and smoking to the table.

"Have more bread."

At last the white butter is passed around in solemn silence, of course, untouched. It is a signal that supper is ended.

In the sitting-room there blazes on the hearth a huge pile of logs, with their ribs stuck full of pine splinters. Ah! these Southern people are more musical than we Yankees. Like Alonzo of Arragon, we always demand old wood to burn, which yields us only spiteful staccato popping; but the green logs of the South shed the soul of music from the great fireplace, piping, whistling, fizzing, purring, in melodious querulousness, as if the soul of Merlin were in the logs.

What need of a candle? The gorgeous yellow firelight floods everything in the room;—the impossible heroes on the wall, wounded and dying, lying straight as a marline-spike, with arms prettily composed, unruffled uniforms, and a sweet doll-like smile on their faces; the dried "yarbs," and the ears of maize hanging by the husk; the polished rifle and powder-horn on wooden hooks; the fly-specked plaster dogs and lambs on the mantel; the dog-eared almanac; the twists of cotton yarn; the broken legged reel.

Captain Truwhitt is a man of years, but prematurely old from the mental shocks of the war, of its sleepless dread of insurrection, of its buoyant pride so cruelly and tragically wrecked. The full florid face, the hair a little curled, are those of the Georgia farmer.

While his wife and the wench are combing cotton in the corner, the old man sits in his easy chair, crooning of other days.

"Yes, sir, the South is ruined forever, forever, sir. The niggers won't work, and they're just perishin' the country to death. I wish they had the last nigger up thar among 'em, they loved 'em so much. You back agin? Begone, you Ring! Freedom is dead in the United States, dead as a stewed cat, and I wish we had a king. I'll never vote agin, as long as I live; I have no confidence in nuthin'. I've swore never to vote agin in my life."

They persist in leaving the outside door open, and I am all the while roasting before and freezing behind.

"Sherman passed through here, I believe?"

"Well, now, you're mighty right, he did. Two of his cussed, unhung, sneak thieves—'bummers' I reckon they was—rode up here, and asked me whar my silver was hid before ever I could say, 'howdy.' When I told 'em I hadn't no silver, one of the dirty villians cocked his pistol, held it close to my head, and swore he'd let light through my character if I didn't tell, mighty quick, too."

"Did they actually shoot any of your neighbors?"

"They killed one man, but it was some of those hyur crackers done that, who went away and jined Sherman, and come back a-purpose for such doins. But the ever-lastin' scalawags! they jabbed their hands in my wescoat pockets, and when they didn't find nothin' but Confederate money—ha! ha! ha! rather thin pickin', as the goose said to the turkey, when it swallowed the knife-blade—when they didn't find nothin' but Confederate money, they pulled my boots off, and jerked so they drug me out of the cheer, and I come down on the floor a settin."

"Ha! ha! ha! But the soldiers were not so brutal as these bummers, I think?"

"No, thar was a Ohio captain—you Watch! William, why dont you drive them dogs out?—a mighty clever man, that captain was. He wouldn't nigh let the soldiers come in the house, and when the water got riley in the well, he wouldn't 'low 'em to tech it, though I've seen many a poor soldier look mighty wishful at it, as if he was starvin' for water."

Will nobody shut that dreadful door? Once I venture to shut it myself, but straightway somebody goes through again, and leaves it open, purposely, I suspect.

"Captain, it must have been gloomy for men of your years toward the end of the war."

"O, my God! my God! when I think of it, I wonder that I am still alive. As soon as night come, I always made my boy Toney—a faithful nigger he was, I could trust him even when the Yankees come—lock every door on the place, and sleep with a gun and pistol before my door. We never knew at night, when we laid down, but our house, and we with it, would be burned to ashes before morning. The whole country was full of rovin' bummers, and our own deserters and bomb-proofs begun to creep out of their holes, like hyenas when they scent the carrion, and prowl about at night, to be revenged on the conscript officers. Three times a shot was fired across my hairth, and nearly every fortnight we heerd of somebody bein' shot down at night before his own fireplace. D'ye see them thick shutters of boards? I had to have them made to keep murderers from firin' into the house at night."*

"I have seen hundreds of houses with such shutters; but I supposed it was owing to the scarcity of glass in the Confederate times."

"Then we heard Sherman was comin', and one night I told my wife the sky looked mighty red off yonder, and then we knew he was comin', and the next night it was a heap redder—O, my God! to see the blue bright sky redden up with a steady pace, brighter and more luridly dreadful night after night, towards all you have and love on the yearth, till at last thar comes a night when all you can see of God's great heaven is a flaming concave of fire, and to have children runnin' and cryin' that they will all be shot, and kiverin' themselves in the cotton! And then to have my niggers settin' up all night long, the night when Sherman come, a singin' and shoutin' praises, though they knew my wife and children was skeered nigh about to death, and a watchin' the red sky. They thought he was comin' in a chariot of fire, and I really believe old Dinah 'lowed to go to heaven in the chariot."

"Yes, grandpa," interrupts a little girl, "I heerd her say so, and aunt Betsy 'lowed all her gals was gwine to have Yankee husbands too."

What a study for some future Beard was that—a little group of life-long bondmen, sleepless with the vague and and ineffable transports of that coming something, sitting and singing at midnight, and watching that great glare in the heavens, where Sherman, by the light of a burning State, was gathering his red sheaves!

"How did your negroes behave when freed?"

'O, they went plumb crazy, like everybody else's niggers. I always treated my niggers with the greatest kindness, never struck a grown-up servant in my life, always give 'em a peck of meal and four pound of bacon a week, and every one had their truck-patch, and their own hogs and chickens. As soon as ever one got sick, my wife always toted 'em here before our own hairth, for they won't nuss one another; and many a time my wife has sot up with 'em, when their own mothers was a carousin' and a cuttin' up monkey shines all night. But, after all my kindness, why, the last one of 'em showed me their heels, like a passel of colts, and away they went, though they left all the old women and the children on my hands."

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*It is only just to say that this description was more applicable to the mountainous regions of the Carolinas.

"The negroes everywhere, I believe, seemed to think they were not free unless they left the old master."

"Yes, but they was so ongrateful! They didn't even come to ask for advice about goin' away. I called my niggers all up one mornin', and tole 'em the war was comin' to an end, and they'd all be free, and asked 'em if anybody had ever been kinder to 'em than 'old master,' and offered 'em wages if they'd stay, and every one promised to do it. But the very minit they see a blue-coat, away the fool whipper-snappers went, every one of 'em as crazy as a bed-bug. I never *did* see sech fool doins in all my *life* as them niggers done."

Here the little pickaninny in the corner stealthily leaves his stool and crouches along to the sleeping cat, in whose ear he blows a stiff blast, and is infinitely amused to see it jump up and shake its head.

"Ha! you black rascal, your mother run away and left you for me to feed, and as soon as you are big enough, you'll run away, too. Sech fool doins—why, when the first bummers come, my niggers wanted to hug 'em, they did. When the bummers couldn't find nothin' on me, they called all the niggers into the gin, and told 'em a long cock-and-bull story about Uncle Abe and his dear children, and how they'd never want anything more in this life, and wouldn't have to work, and then they made the niggers give 'em all their silver—and many a nigger in the old time had more ready cash hid in old rags than his master—all their silver, and rings, and things, and they rode off with 'em."

"I think the negroes were not often duped so."

"No, 'twas only bummers done the like. I always treated my niggers kind. Every mornin', as regular as the day come, I went down to their quarters, and looked through 'em to see if all was right; and I always took a flour biscuit in my pocket to divide among the children. They'd all set on the fence, with their little woolly heads in a row, and their eyes a shinin' as pert as crickets, waitin' for 'Ole Mawssa' to come, and they'd run to meet me like as if it was their father. I done it to make them love me. Sometimes, when I was sick or away, they'd set thar nigh about all the forenoon, wonderin' why 'Ole Mawssa' didn't come. Yet, when Sherman came along, do you think, every last skunk of 'em run away."

"Did none of your negroes ever come back?"

"Yes, in two or three years all of 'em that was livin' come back, but I had all the niggers hired I wanted, and couldn't take 'em back. I didn't wonder so much at these young ones, but thar was one nigger, old Shade, had ought to knowed better. Me and Shade was jest of an age, and when I come of age my father give me Shade, the first nigger I ever owned. I used to reason with Shade, just like a white man, and asked his advice many a time. I used to think mighty few niggers would ever git to heaven, but I was certain old Shade would be one of 'em. He swam once three miles in a dreadful freshet to save my life. But Shade got the biggest bug in his ear of any of 'em, and he left a comfortable home in his old age to go spear pismires in Savannah.

"About three months after the surrender he come crawlin' back, worn plumb down to a skeleton, so I didn't know him till he spoke, and wanted to come back. He said he had been sick in a Federal hospital, and he saw the nurses sprinkle some white stuff in the big kettle of soup they made for the niggers, which he said was arsenic; but I never more'n half believed this part of his story, though Shade always did tell the truth. I don't think it would have been possible, such devilish work, do you? Still, I never knew Shade tell a lie in my life, never.

"First, I told Shade he'd run away without askin' my advice, and now I couldn't let him come back; but he plead so hard, for the sake of my son Americus—he's dead and gone now, poor boy!—who he used to coddle a thousand times on his knees, and said if I didn't let him die in the old cabin, he'd die under the eaves, and I couldn't refuse him. My wife took some rags and blankets, and made him a bed in his own little cabin, where he lived all his life, and when we went to him in the morning, sure enough poor old Shade was dead."

At these recollections the old man is deeply moved, bows his head upon his hands, and remains silent for a long time, now and then brushing away with the back of his hand a trickling tear. At length he recovers himself, and with a laugh points to the pickaninny, whose head has for many minutes been weaving and circling in a sleepy maze, and jerking as if trying to fling itself off its shoulders.

And so, with garrulous talk and jocularity, as of Grandfather Smallweed, amid that large satisfaction which men feel when they find they do not hate each other as they supposed, the evening slips along far into the hours when the great clock takes so long to deliver its solemn message, as if it, too, were almost asleep.

There is a rough and ruddy vigor in the Georgia farmer which smacks of his good red hills. The pine is generally the emblem of poverty, of which in North Carolina there is one dead and hopeless level. The live-oak is the sign and surety of wealth in the soil, and in South Carolina this alternates with the pine in a level which is equally dead and hopeless. In all that part which is the heart and best of Georgia the pine alternates with the deciduous oak, in a rolling land; and there is distributed wealth, energy, variety.

The Georgians in the war were of that type of heroes sung by Pindar, plucking a slow flower of glory, but of a lofty and enduring fortitude. Mortally stricken at the last, and all her iron sinews rent from end to end, as if by the lightnings, Georgia yet pillared resolutely up upon her hundred regiments the tottering Confederacy. Despite the secret machinations of a few men, based on a petty personal pique against Davis, the people of the State were the mainstay of the rebellion, next after the Old Dominion. In all the Confederacy none deserved less than did stalwart and honest, and hard-headed Georgia to have thrust upon her the ghoulish and damning infamy of Andersonville.

CHAPTER V.

THE COTTON-PLANTERS.

AS I crossed over from Columbus on the great Opelika bridge, the Chattahoochee was roaring over the gray rocks far beneath, all gory, as if the lightning had wounded the big red heart of Georgia.

An Alabama planter told me a story which illustrates the ancient disbelief of his class in the negro's ability to keep his own life in his body. He owned a ferry on the Chattahoochee, and to make his ferryman faithful gave him half the profits. Harry saved his gains carefully, and in the course of time proposed to his master to buy his freedom. He consented, and a bargain was made that Harry should pay $800 for himself, half in hand. Not long after there came a prodigious freshet, Harry's skiff was capsized in the middle of the stream, and himself carried down two or three miles before he could get ashore, more dead than alive. Wofully bedraggled and dilapidated he presented himself before his master.

"Mass' John, dis chile like to trade back."

"What's the matter, Harry?"

"Tell you what, mass' John, four hundred dollars mo' money 'n I want to risk in dis hyur nigger.

From Columbus to the Coosa it was Georgia over again —wearisome with its red-clay hills and its woods of pine. And down the Coosa, too, with its aguish fens of bulrushes, everything was blue and detestable with falling rain.

But down the lordly valley of the Alabama I walked with delight. It is a land of plenteous pork, and corn, and juice of corn; a land of log-cribs, high and spindling, and full of snow-white corn; of red smoke-houses, strongly locked, whose inside walls laughed with gammoned hams, and "middlings," and sacks of hominy, and jars of buttermilk, old and mighty. The whole face of the magnificent valley was wreathed in a ham-fat pone, and buttermilk smile.

As soon as you enter the suburbs of a southern town, you see two negroes leaning across a gate.

"Good mornin', uncle Jim, howdy?"

"Well, I'se jest tolable like; how's yesself?"

"Jest midlin'. Seems like I has rheumatiz all de time. How's yer wife, uncle Jim?"

"Well, aunt Betsy, she's mighty bad; got de glorium squeezus, doctor says."

Who ever saw two negroes meet, who were not in very bad health, I wonder? They are never more than "jest tolable," at best.

Montgomery is built in a pretty cove in the river hills, in the shape of an arc of a parquet in a theatre. Standing on the lofty walls of the capitol, on the highest outside hills, the spectator looks league upon league both up and down the ox-bow Alabama, which bowls its broad waters straight into the city; gnaws forever at the raw and bloody bluff; and then goes off in nearly the same direction it follows in approaching.

Albert Sidney Johnston pleaded forcibly the claims of Montgomery to be the capital of the Confederacy, saying that the heart of the body ought not to be worn on the shoulder, for every daw to peck. But the querulous old Mother of Presidents was hesitating, and they tossed her the bauble.

Richmond won the coveted crown, but, unlike the chaplet of laurel worn by Tiberius to shield himself from the bolts of Jove, it encircled her haughty brow with the war's whole coronal of lightnings.

As one travels westward, one departs continually farther and farther from the strictness, straightforwardness and sternness of the Atlantic States. Western breadth and blandness increase. Sombre Savannah was the cruelest master of the freedmen I passed in all my journey. Montgomery was far enough west to laugh a little. When the freedmen were first marshaled as voters, a wag in Montgomery, among other tricks, induced over a score of them to vote in the letter-box in the post-office.

A plantation negro not far from the city, when I asked him for whom he had voted, said, "I voted for 'mass' McLeod, an' de 'Publican party, an' de United States, an' de Congress."

I am constantly astonished at the quickness with which the freedmen pick up the catch-words and slang of politics, reading, music, carpentry, and such superficial acquirements. I hazard little in saying that, in these matters, they are apter than any class of whites. But the difference between white and black is indicated in the remark of Themistocles, who said he could not learn to fiddle, but he could make a great city grow where a village was before.

From Montgomery to Selma the Alabama wanders down by the longest way, like a whining school-boy in the morning, slipping smooth and laggard through many a superflous sinuosity, as if loth to leave the regal valley which itself has created. Beneath the overhanging fringes of sweet-gums, magnolias, and sycamores, which hold up their white arms in holy horror at this murderer of the hills, it rambles backward and forward, and moans against the bluffs, which hurl it away with loathing.

On the ferry-scow at Selma there were several men of the poorest class, white-faced, gaunt, tobacco-chewing men, talking with that flippancy of vulgarity characteristic of the ignorant in the South.

"I'm d— ef I don't think that was the meanest trick I ever heerd of—'lowin a nigger to testify agin a white man," said one, spitting vehemently into the river.

"Thar aint one nigger outer ten but what you can hire him for five dollars to swear a man's life away," echoed another, to which they all assented.

There was a negro on board who, in passing the heels of a mule, was kicked out into the river. It was after nightfall, but no one offered him any assistance, nor did they even stop the scow. I afterwards found out that he swam ashore.

"Only one woolly head the less," said the first speaker, with a brutal laugh. D— 'em, I like to see 'em droppin' off. And that ar's the benefit to we po' men of this hyur freedom they've give 'em. Ef that had been some man's slave, they'd raised heaven and yearth to save him, and gin him thirty-nine for fallin' in."

The great plateau between Selma and Demopolis, jutting down between the Alabama and the Tombigbee, is one vast undulating cotton-field, islanded with magnificent natural groves of oak, and dotted with the lordly mansions of the planters. The flag with which Sergeant Bates passed me on the railroad track, fluttered its starry folds within easy sight of ten thousand negroes, plowing for cotton between the two cities.

In her normal condition Alabama, though younger than Georgia, feels less in her councils the influence of the middle class, the small planters. Hence, as the typical Alabamian, it will be proper to select a great planter, who shall be designated as Colonel A. St. Leger Varnell.

He lives in a white house, which is square, and has a four-sided hip-roof. The chimneys are sometimes extraforaneous, but, in this pattern of house, they are oftener taken in-doors. There is always a veranda extending across one side, and sometimes more, with columns which are also square, plain, and formal.

Around it there is a good characteristic of the lovely and thriftless South. A smiling bed of verbenas ill conceals the jagged rift in the trellis which supplies the place of range-work; and the gate by which we enter this garden of delights leans one lazy shoulder on the post, for lack of a hinge. In the rear there is a double row of whitewashed negro cabins, and a garden of collards.

The house is bisected by a spacious hall, which contains a banister ending in a rich heavy whorl, a hat-stand, and the inevitable gold-headed cane. The apartments are of the old-time, stately, frigid sombreness, and are joined by folding-doors. In one of them is a rich grand piano, which bears atop a tiny negro statuette in bronze, dancing on top of a wire, and reaching out his hand for his mistress' music.

At the hour for dinner we retire, as always, to a separate cook-house. A number of lively pickaninnies, dressed in coarse, white kirtles, flutter about with superfluous assiduities. Few sights in the South are more pleasant to me than these little waiters about a planter's table.

First, there is sweet-potato soup, rarely good. The body of the dinner offers sweet potatoes boiled, dry, floury and exceedingly digestible, and baked red potatoes. Take selected potatoes, which bake juicy, almost like candied honey, and a bowl of buttermilk, old and rich, and slightly acid, and you have the best eating in thirty-seven States. Then there is a sweet-potato pudding, and the mouth of my memory waters when I write thereof.

After the tiny cup of black coffee and corn-bread, which often singularly conclude a southern dessert, we sit in the veranda, and the table talk is renewed. Colonel Varnell is a young man; tall; spare; black, fine, long, clinging hair, combed behind the ears; straight nose; skin dead and rather dark; drawling voice—a melancholy but fiery character, and capable of intense devotion.

"O, sir, there is not the slightest affinity or community between our people and the Yankees. *En effet*, the North first seceded from the old constitution to a 'higher power,' from the old religion into infidelity, from the old language into transcendentalism, from the old fashions into nakedness, and there remained nothing for us but to sever the only remaining bond, that of government. It was inevitable, sir."

"But was not this simply the work of slavery, and not the result of inherent incompatibilities?"

"No, sir, by no means, sir. We follow the noble pursuit of Washington and Lee; the Yankees are peddlers, and greasy operatives. We are a free and fighting people; the Yankees are hucksters, and swallow any insult for the sake of the main chance. Add to this, sir, the national genius of the Yankees is essentially prying and austere, while our people are genial, jovial, humorous. Question history, and you will find that no thoroughly humorous people, like the modern Spaniards, or the medieval Venetians, have ever been able to maintain any true republic. *Revenons a nos moutons.* The tendency in the South is continually toward the limitation of fanatical notions among the masses, and the establishment of strong-handed order."

"You mean monarchy. But you will remember the provision of the constitution, that Congress shall guarantee a republican form——"

(Fiercely.) "I understand, sir. Pray don't flaunt that bloody rag before my eyes.

> 'Force rules the world still,
> Has ruled it, shall rule it.'

It was fit that that should come from Boston. But *Deo volente*, the South will make that a false prophecy. Do you suppose, sir, that Illinois will submit forever to see her glorious prairies tapped to pour eleemosynary wheat into the sacks of the blue-bellied, pinch-penny, cod-liver-eaters of Maine? The day will come, sir, and delay not, when the East and the West shall be torn asunder as a pledged garment is rent by the dicers. And when the keepers fall upon the bloody ground, clutched in a fierce embrace, who then will keep the caged lion? Aye, who will keep him then?"

"Call the garment seamless, and the comparison is good. Now I will show you what things are bound to make it seamless, and therefore not easily torn.

"In weaving this great garment, Agriculture stretches the warp, but Manufactures weave in the weft. You see, therefore, the seam between the East and West is continually pushed inland, and it will finally be woven entirely out into the Pacific.

"The seam between the North and the South will be a good deel harder to get rid of, because it is the seam between white and coffee-color or downright black. But the South will bleach itself, just as New England did long ago, but more slowly. The negroes, now that they are free to go where they choose, are moving toward the coast, and toward Liberia faster than formerly.

"The deplorable misfortune of our country has always been that our struggle for homogeneity has been, not as in England, a social one, but as in Germany, a sectional one; and the only thing that creates this lack of homogeneity is difference of opinion about the negro. If negroes were distributed all over the Union, we should all think alike about them, because we should all know alike, and there would be no quarrel. The civil feuds died out in England, because it was neighbor against neighbor all over the island; but in Germany they never subside, because, as with us, it is one great united section against another, whom it is impossible to make acquainted with each other.

"To recapitulate. I have shown how we are making the garment seamless, as between East and West; and how it is becoming seamless, as between North and South, by the gradual bleaching of the latter into white. The South will not attempt to tear it again, though the sections will always find cause of quarrel and of hatred, until they become of one color.

"The negro is the real Disunionist of the South; in fact, he is disunion itself, not by any disloyalty of his—far from it—but by his mere presence, for which he is not responsible."

"If your argument be true—and 'thou reasonest well' —may we never lack a nigger to drop into the Federal hell-broth in which the South is mixed, to resolve it apart! Yet I shrink from the abhorred infliction. Consider, sir, what a high-toned people suffer from the contact with a brutish race, when they can not control them by force. No northern man can understand it. The nigger has no property, and you can't get redress in the courts. He has no honor, and you can't even insult him. All our lives we have chid them as inferiors, and with our words there was an end; but now they give curse for curse. I will none of it! I will none of it! by ——! sir, no man whose hair grows in his head at both ends, shall ever give me words in my teeth. He shall die in his tracks like a beast."

"You will give the negro the same privilege?"

"What, put myself on a level with a nigger? Do you believe a nigger is human?"

"There are, as Fray Jayme Bleda would say, a hundred marks to show he is *not* human. A negro, as you are aware, wraps his only blanket around his head, and turns it toward the fire, but a white man sleeps with his feet toward the fire. A majority of negroes are left-handed, but white men are mostly right-handed. The nostril of a negro ——"

"Ah! you are jesting."

"I was only stating facts."

"But, if you please, let us speak seriously, *jocis relictis.* Our people are hardly in the mood for jesting now. Each fresh disaster seemed to nerve our enemies to a fiercer energy, but when the final and awful ruin fell upon our people, they were broken with unutterable grief and despair. Our sons and brothers in the bloody grave, our cherished homes in ashes, our beloved country a smoking and desolated waste, before us a life of poverty, brutal insult, and unknown and unimaginable retributions, and these foolish and miserable beings leaping in exultation around us, almost on the fresh-made graves of our heroic dead, and even taunting us with being—G——! did not some bite the dust for their impudence!"

A pause ensues, during which the host goes out and calls a negro from his plow, nearly a quarter of a mile distant, to fetch him a drink, though he went as far to call him as he would have done in going to the well.

"Colonel Varnell, I am anxious to hear an intelligent Southern opinion as to the freedman's future."

"Well, before I attempt that, let me give you some grounds for an opinion. I shall give you hard facts, Yankee fashion.

"In the first place, the nigger is a thief 'by spherical predominance.' Before emancipation, my old pastor used to instruct all the servants of his congregation in the basement of our church; and in his absence I often taught them myself, not Voodooism, but the pure religion of the Bible. But the moment they were free, they must have their own church and preacher, and the d—— rascal preached his first sermon in the boots he stole from my old pastor."

"But will not the sense of responsibility which comes with freedom cure this evil?"

"Not at all, sir. Since they become free, they steal less from their masters, but more from each other.

"In the second place, they are incurably lazy. Let me tell you a fact you may not have noticed. When a white man constructs a well-sweep, he so adjusts the load at the end that it will not quite balance the full bucket; but when a nigger makes one for his own use, he balances it in such a way that he has to throw a good part of his weight on the pole to lower the bucket, but when this is full, it returns of itself. Why is this? Simply because he will not lift, or is what we call a 'lubber-lifter'."

"I have noticed this fact, vaguely, but your explanation is new."

"In the third place, they are outrageous sponges. On my plantation I have one of my old servants named Addison, the most faithful and industrious nigger I ever saw, and his wife is just as good. But they have about forty children, grandchildren, nephews, cousins, and second cousins, who are, with few exceptions, low-down thieves. They have an amazing affection for Addison, however, and every Saturday and Sunday his wife has to set three or four tables. The amount of turkey dinners, chicken potpies, biscuits, and roasted pigs consumed there is incredible. You would be astonished if you knew how many niggers get half their living off the few industrious."

"It is this gregariousness, doubtless, which makes the negroes so widely acquainted. I think I never saw two meet who did not know each other."

"In the fourth place, niggers are not naturally inclined, as is supposed in the North, to be tillers, much less owners of the soil. Go among the Fantis and Ashantis of Africa, from whom we got most of our servants, and you find them rather ingenious, imitative, and deft in mechanical pursuits, but not tenacious of the soil, though there is no superior race to interfere with their ownership. The nigger is fond of cities. Have you, in your journey, found any niggers owning land?"

"I found three in North Carolina."

"Did you ever know a nigger in the North who owned any land?"

"I don't recall any."

"Well, then, here is my opinion of the nigger's future. All who can possibly live there will crowd into the cities, particularly near the coast. A great majority of those who stay in the country will avoid long contracts, working as much as possible by the day or week. Just after the war they had a fine fancy for renting land, because the Yankees talked so much to them about it, but they are fast abandoning it for set wages, because, like regular soldiers or college boys, they don't want the trouble of balancing chances and precasting the future. I don't deny the quickness with which many of them learn, which is often wonderful; but it is only superficial, and don't give them tact, don't give them what you Yankees call a knack of affairs. Why, I had a boy named Wilton, forty years old, the most sensible nigger and the best driver I ever had; but when he became free, he rented forty acres of me, and planted the last acre of it in cucumbers, because the only Yankee he ever saw was fond of them! He thought it would be the best crop in the market."

"How about politics?"

"Ah! we'll capture that battery quick enough, and turn it on its makers. We have the *argumentum ad crumenam.* What's the nigger's vote to him without work? He'll find himself voting for us *malgri soi.* The Yankee is near heaven, in the nigger's thinking, but we are on earth yet, and own a little of it, and the nigger will vote at last for the men who give him work. The masses couldn' control them, for the niggers had always despised them and called them 'poor white trash;' but let the South get back its leaders in politics, and they will follow them. The niggers worked for us before, and we were strong enough; now they'll work and vote too for us, and we'll be stronger than before, and make the masses know their places."

The Alabamians are the Greeks of the South; The Georgians are more like the Romans. The former excel in eloquence, or in what Coleridge calls the "literature of power;" the latter in the "literature of fact," in comedy, and in humor. Young as Alabama is, she has produced more and greater orators than Georgia. Hamilton, Yancey, Clay, Calhoun—these are all Alabamian names; and though none of them were greatly wise in office, or even crafty in the conduct of caucuses, they were all greater than any Georgian, save one, in that swift and voluble eloquence, which wields at will the "fierce democraty" of the South.

In Mobile, it was, I am told, that a certain orator, with truly Ionic craftiness, pressed the blacksmith into the work of "firing the Southern heart," by bringing upon the rostrum manacles inscribed "For Yancey," "For Toombs," etc., which he told his audience were captured at Manassas.

I think the women of the Alàbama valley, especially at Selma and on the great plantations west of it, are the best type of American beauty. The ideal of Alabama—oftenest seen in Selma and Montgomery—is an oval face; eyes black and flashing; skin rather dead and bloodless; raven hair—constant, impassioned, proud, slaying with a glance of her eyes. Another type frequently seen on the plantation is;—face a wider oval; eyes hazel or blue; fair haired; skin dead and marble-white, or transparent, and revealing an exquisitely tender glowing pink—loving, modest, cheerful, earnest. The former type prevails, however.

The inhabitants of the great cotton plateau, specially those living on the Tombigbee, are the tallest men I have seen in the lowlands of the whole South. Like the lordly sycamore of that river among trees, or the peerless Cherokee rose among its kindred,—matchless in stature as in beauty— so are they who drink from the rivers of Alabama, among the men and the women of the South.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH THE YAM-EATERS.

IN Eastern Mississippi I crossed a hundred miles of piney-woods, just like those of North Carolina. A weary, mean, stale country is this same piney forest. The sallow-looking soil, though it has an unbounded capacity for producing yams, is full of unseemly toads, all manner of spiders, agüe-seeds, and biliousness. When at last you find a glade in the mighty woods, every tussock of broom-grass is a covert for a rattlesnake, whose tail suddenly shivers with a fine delicate intonation.

Mother Nature herself seems to have the chills in Mississippi. Now and then there comes up the dank breath of the swamps; a cloud intercepts the sunlight; the pine leaves sough in a kind of cold blue shudder.

In a moment after comes the fever. The sun's rays stream down in a very yellow, aguish glare, shimmering on the fences like fever-stricken witches, and blinking among the pines. Now the trees move with an uneasy stir, as a fever patient rustles the drapery of his couch, in his burning restlessness.

At evening the "March peepers" begin to wriggle and chirp in the scummy marsh, which is the abode of Yellow Jack; thrust out their cold green noses, and wink silvery winks in the moonlight. Then the first breath of coming spring floats through the open windows, alternately in sickly clouds of warm and cool.

In the middle of Meridian there was a huge barn-like tavern with a deep veranda—a good confederate in its linten-gray. It was settled and cracked in the middle; chairs punched through the rain-rotted veranda floor; and swine insinuated themselves at night under the bar-room, and emitted dolorous noises at uncertain intervals. It was the sole lingering representative of *ante-bellum* Meridian, being the only house which escaped Sherman's brand. It stood up in its grimy bulkiness, among the funniest little houses, all smirking in white paint, built since the war in place of the log-cabins hastily thrown up after Sherman retired. Here then was one representative of the old United States, encircled by these pert younglings of the new United States; and these again were surrounded by an outside rim of the Confederacy—log-cabins with stick-and-clay chimneys.

When I went into the dining-room of this tavern, I saw one of the waiters start, look sharply at me, and move a few paces toward me. He had fine Caucasian features, but was jet-black. He afterward took his station behind my chair, and seemed to penetrate my every wish before it was uttered. He brought me everything that was rarest and best.

"What is your name?" I asked, wondering what he could mean by these attentions.

He asked me to wait a little, and as soon as the other guests were gone, he leaned down on the table, and began in a low, soft voice:—

"I thought you was my young master, sah, as died at Antietam. You look 'zactly like him, and I thought shoo' 'nuff you was him, riz from the dead. 'Deed I did, sah, at first, and I was mighty nigh boo-hooin', sah, 'cause you didn't speak to me, 'cause I thought mebbe he wasn't killed after all. My young master was mighty good to me, and when he was a dyin' on the field, and couldn't speak, sah, he whispered to 'em to tell his mother to set us all free, and he mentioned Drake particular—that's me. I was mighty glad to see you, sah, 'cause I knowed anybody looked like my young master would treat me kind. They don't treat me kind here, sah,shot at me twicet.

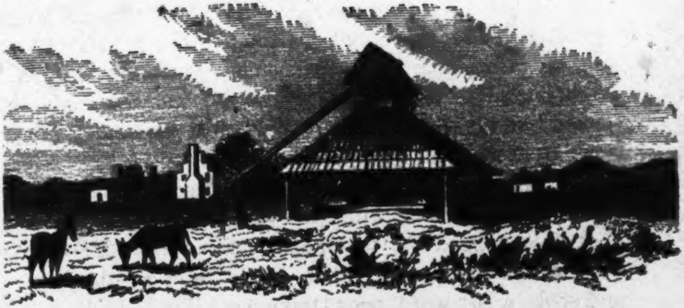
Next morning Drake came to my room when I was about to leave, and, with the tears standing in his great dark eyes, begged me to take him away from Meridian. Of course I could not. When I took him by the hand, and spoke a last word, poor Drake wept like a child.

A man with whom I staid one night told me that, in the days of slavery, it was an ordinance of the Almighty that no man should ever own a thousand slaves. I found this strange superstition more than once in the South. Every one had some instance of his personal knowledge, where a planter, owning nearly a thousand, resolved to own that number for once; but before he could get the requisite number some that he already had would die or escape, and balk his purpose.

Thus does the conscience of man, however blunted or dulled, yield assent to that command which the Almighty leveled against avarice, when he forbade the Israelites to lay field to field.

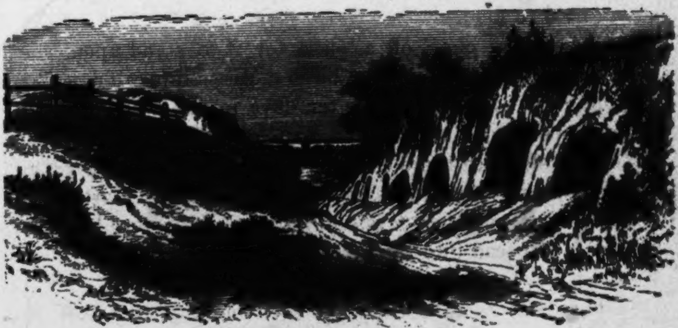
When you chop off a place for it to stand upon, you have nearly logs enough to build a Mississippi cabin. The immigrant's family can live ten days in the wagon, while he chops goodly trunks, and flattens them on two sides. On the eleventh there come to him men out of the pathless depths of the woods, summoned by some mysterious telegraphy, and they "raise." In five days more he mortises a bedstead into the corner, and knits a chimney with sticks.

The next cabin springs up even more quickly, and is



COTTON PRESS.

A NEGRO VILLAGE.



CAVES AT VICKSBURG.

embellished with a feather-board gable, and a smooth shingle, bearing that winsome legend of Mississippi—"Gem Saloon." Its face of golden pine smiles upon the thirsty wayfarer, alluring him to the delusive grog.

Next comes the grocery; then another saloon, with a little, square, white gable, and a boarded awning; then a tavern. At last there is a village, but it is only an auger-hole in the woods. Like potato-chits reaching palely up in a cellar, the Mississippian grows very tall. Cut off from the shining of the sun, and the light of the "eternal and incorruptible heavens," what wonder if the soul of the piney-woods man is hard, uncanny, and unsusceptible?

What an index of souls is this meeting-house, with the hard, pitiless stare of its paintless wainscoting and pulpit, and the straight-backed seats, where little legs stick away out like chubby handspikes. You can just hear the solemn "whangdoodle" whine the moment you enter. Yet there assemble here a multitude of pale tall children, to intone the rudiments of music, as they lift up their voices with the master in a sacred howl. Whence do they all come?

Huge ox-wains come and go, groaning beneath their baled portions of Mississippi's great fleece. But you see no opening in the piney-woods. Whence do they all come?

Once a day the locomotive staggers out of the forest, pauses amid a crowd of little cotton-heads, corn-dodger-heads, burnt corn-dodger-heads, pigs, pups, hounds, wisps of cotton, bales of cotton, then vanishes in the woods like a scared buck. The unaccustomed traveler stands on the platform, and I hear him ask, "Whence do they all come?"

In Brandon a former Union officer told me a story, which illustrates a phase of emancipation. During the war a negro was brought into the lines, and an attempt was made to get some useful information from him.

"What's your name?" they asked.

"Jim."

"Jim what?"

"No, sah; not Jim Watt; I'se jest Jim, sah."

"But what is your other name?"

"Haint got no other name, sah. I'se jest Jim nothin' mo'."

"What's your master's name?"

"Haint got no mawssa, sah; he runned away—yah! yah! yah! I'se free nigger now."

"Well what's your father's name?"

"Haint got none, sah; neber had none. I'se jest Jim hisself."

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"No, sah. Haint got no sister, no brother, no mother, no father, nor nothin'. Neber had none. I'se jest Jim. Dat's all there is of us."

That filthy misnomer, the Pearl, separates the piney-woods from the valley of the Mississippi with the greatest sharpness. On one side the endless piney-woods; on the other side a magnificent prairie-like roll of Miami loam, bearing noble forests of beeches in their russet suits, sweet-gums still flickering with snatches of autumn flame, the oak, the holly, the gorgeous magnolia. Here is the cotton-wood, too, which begins, and is co-extensive with, the Great West.

And Jackson, just over the river, is really the first city in the West. Entering it, I thought to cheer my thirsty soul with lager beer. It was a very small glass of very mean beer, but the price was twenty-five cents. As I laid down that amount of currency, I quietly remarked to the proprietor that, in Montgomery, I drank as good for fifteen cents. Thereupon, with a most lordly and contemptuous wave of the arm, he shoved the currency back.

"Never mind, sir; I'll make you a present of one glass of beer," said this Mississippi Teuton.

I felt entirely demolished. What a deal of scorn was in that red pudding-sack face! Ah yes, I was now fully in the West, and knew it not.

In a pitiful den, cobbled up one story high, among the ruins of burnt brick, and roofed with canvas, you might see a retired young officer, still in his Confederate buttons, complacently stroking his pale, soaped beard, and regarding his donkey-load of groceries with an air of serene indifference as to trade. A planter, with the skirts of his sheep's-gray coat studiously and rebelliously long, in proportion as the Yankee fashion is short, enters in his swaggering way, and orders muslin. He suits himself with the first piece, and tosses down the money. Does he ask the price? No; he disdains a thing so "picayunish." What a fine and lofty scorn of small moneys!

Nowhere else in the Union do men so frequently assert that inalienable prerogative of an American—the right to draw and pass a resolution. Nowhere else are the people so devoted to great political principles, for every candidate has one. Every principle also has a candidate. The people of Jackson live in the greatest harmony and friendliness. Just before an election, every citizen announces himself a candidate, each "at the request of many friends."

Between Jackson and Vicksburg I staid in a grotesque hut, built of fragments, in which paintings of a most gorgeous and sensuous beauty embellished a room like a sty, and the piano shone in absurd grandeur between the dresser and the pot-rack. A very little man, of extreme and dainty culture, leaned away back in his rocking-chair, with an air of utter listlessness and disgust, and kept his delicate hand constantly in motion before his face, as if he were brushing away cob-webs, while he rocked, and delivered a monologue on Reconstruction about half an hour in length.

"O, we brush this altogether to one side, sir. Let them fight it out among themselves. We have *nothing* to do with it, sir; *nothing* whatever to do with it. They have subjugated us, sir; and we have laid down our arms, and have nothing more to do with these things, and now why don't they just settle everything to suit themselves, and not trouble us to put our hands in the disgusting business?"

And then he quoted Byron:—

"And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong."

All through the woods, from the Big Black onward, there were crowds of graves or trenches, digged in haste at midnight, by the flicker of the yellow torch, or the uncertain flash of the cannonade. There the unreturning dead of that sad, sad war slept side by side, Unionist with rebel—one with his name on "Fame's eternal bead-roll," the other consigned to obloquy or sweet oblivion. I was treading already on ground more sacred than Trojan dust.

Mother Earth herself, like Minerva with the Greeks, in that memorable battle-summer made auxiliary war on yon haughty stronghold. All along these yellow earth-billows which she hurled against it are the sodded breakers of battle; and there, where human wave met wave, and the spray of bayonets fiercely flashed, the early grass grows greener from its bloody watering.

And here, half-way down this slope, sat two men once, and broke a celebrated backbone; and here the long cannon stands silently up, erect upon the pedestal, and stares, like Cyclops, with its grim eye toward heaven.

And here are the caves in the steep, yellow walls, almost as undecaying as rock. Crouching here in terror, the people counted through weary nights the slow heart-beats of the cannonade, or listened breathless to its awful tumult by day. They heard the stupendous how—w—w—w of the sixty-four-pounder; the keen ping—g—g—g of the of the rifle ball; and that most fiendish and blood-freezing sound of battle, the diabolical yell of bursted bombs—whew—zz—zu—whish—e—ye—woop! Vicksburg shudders yet at these hideous memories; nay, it is itself one great ghastly shudder of hills, a perennial geologic death-rigor.

A minute more and I stand upon the hill by the court-house. Looking down into the sooty chimneys of the steamboat, I can almost see their flaming hearts of fire. Over on the low opposite shore Grant's terrible dogs of war, squatted on their haunches, bayed iron-throated summons at the doomed city, while the blazing earthworks in its rear wrapped it in a sheet of level flame.

Far across the blue flat of Louisiana I can see where the smooth old Mississippi, coming down from the frozen North, reads his long argument for the Union. He rolls his great flood southward, as if forgetting the Hill City, to a point west of me; then doubles grandly backward, then eastward; flows in a slow and solemn march toward the National Cemetery beneath the hill, where he turns again southward, chafing his huge flank, as if in affection, almost against the serried graves, and chanting an eternal requium to the asserters of his liberty; hews his giant highway in the hillside; then sweeps before the cockloft city in the pride of its greatness.

In Mississippi we will visit Tammany Jones, one of those drollest of all mortals, the Western piney-woods men. It was over the doors of such, or around their hats, that the

Union vanguard sometimes found the mystic cord, twisted of a red strand and a white one, which said as plainly as words could say, "The blue we dare not, but the red we will not." This was the blood sprinkled upon the lintel which Sherman passed over in that direful day when he smote the first-born of the rebellious.*

In the vast primeval forest where he lives, there are never any tempests to keep his door in a ghostly clacking; but he hears all night, above the roof, the melancholy soughing of the pines, like the sighing of some lonely, wandering wraith of a Pascagoula. Sometimes he is startled at midnight by a clutch of talons on his roof, and then thesepulchralvoice of Madge-howlet resounds through the attic like a roll of stage-thunder.

One of the queerest things in human nature is the early rising of these piney-woods men, coupled with their egregious laziness and personal uncleanness. A score of times I have known them rise long before daybreak, spit on their hands, "to git a good start," make a fire, and then sit in the house the whole livelong day.

By the door there are some stunted sun-flowers—those universal hierophants of the rude poetry which blossoms in the soul of the lowly. There is, also a harmless and necessary log-built hen-house, and a little patch of cow-peas, okra for the dish of gumbo, and "sich-like truck." Against the house are stretched all manner of pelts—raccoons', opossums', foxes', and beavers'—whose ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted tails flutter like the captured battle-flags I once saw on the cabin of a conquering Major-General. These are the parchments testifying to his graduation in Draw-bead College, and these caudal ribbons are fairer in his eyes than all baccalaureate silks and seals.

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*To be accurate, it is necessary to say that all the members of this secret organization whom I ever saw were in, and natives of Georgia.

If I omit to speak of his dogs, and of dogs in general, may my name be Ichabod. Nobody in the chivalrous South, except Cuffee, is such a fool as to walk; and in the night we all looked of one color, and, either by mistake or by design, they gave my calves many an outrageous *ante-bellum* nip. A sad-eyed hound, with his drooping ears, and his long, melancholy cry, making

"So musical a discord, such sweet thunder"

as he runs in the glorious chase, I admire to a passion; but these mangy tykes, with their ears eaten off close up to their heads, and their bobbed tails—to be bitten by such beasts! The fondness of some of the piney-woods men for these wretched curs passes anything recorded of London or Benares.

Tammany Jones wears an old-fashioned brindled suit throughout, bagging trowsers, jerkin, waistcoat buttoned up to the chin, and a fox-skin cap with a queue of tails. He has an immense shock of hair, which stands out all around in a bushy rim beneath his cap. In that part of his gristly face not concealed by his beard, you can no more read any workings of his soul than you could on a Dutch clock which winks its eyes, except now and then, when he gives it a sort of dry squeeze of self-satisfaction. You must watch his eyes for every thing. The pupils contract and dilate continually, like a cat's. Now they glint with a flash of clownish humor, and now they roll whitely upward, when he is about to utter some extraordinarily whimsical conceit which has just flashed upon him.

In the cabin, what a clutter!

I have a confused recollection of pots, pans, kettles, poker, wife, axe, stag's-horns, snuff-swab; but the only objects of whose presence I am positively certain, are, the long-handled gourd, ornamented with a raccoon's tail, and a cob-pipe whimsically embellished with several rattlesnake's rattles. The thirteen small children are all girls, regularly graded in height, except where the war made a gap in the succession. Their only garments, I judge, are kirtles of coarse negro-cloth, once almost white, which hang to the floor, as limp and as straight as if they were wholly unoccupied.

Jones sits on a tripod stool at one chimney-corner, and I at the other, while the children huddle all over the wood-pile in the corner, and watch me with the owl-eyed, unwinking stare of childhood. Mrs. Jones dusts the clay hearth with a brush of broom-grass, and puts more yams into the ashes for the stranger. Then she sifts meal into a tray, and makes pones. These she pats and pats, and chucks with the spoon over and over again in a kind of farinaceous roundelay, which seems to say:—

"The corn-bread is rough,
The corn-bread is tough,
But thank the good Lord we have enough."

Then she lays two of them side by side in a broken handled spider. Meanwhile Jones and I fall to talking.

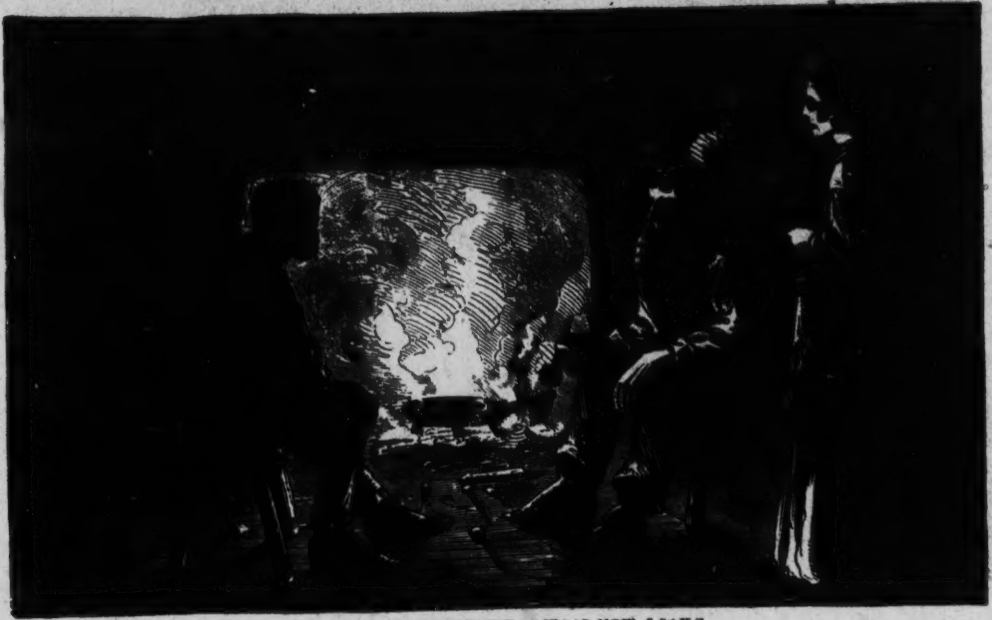
"Well, now, I sa-ay! if I'd been gwine to shoot a Yankee, I'd never pinted a gun at you. You look mo' like one of we uns."

"I am not one of the original stock; but I suppose you call every Northern man a Yankee since the war?"

"Well, I reckon, ya-as. That 'ar war wuz a onlucky circumstance. I alluz kinder tuk to Yankees befo' but that 'ar sorter rubbed the ha'r up my back."

"Were you badly treated by our army?"

"Right smart, ya-as. D'ye see that 'ar gal thar? Well, she wus'nt bigger'n a fyste then, and was as purty as a speckled pup. A soldier feller come along, and thought as how he must have somethin', though 'twuz the last blanket we hed in the housen; so he jest laid the gal onto the flo', tuk the blanket by the corners, and histed it up,



TAMANY JONES'S FIRESIDE.—"WAAL NOW, I SAY."

an' you orter seed that 'ar gal roll out 'cross the flo'."

"The soldiers couldn't always tell who their friends were."

"But they sometimes knowed mighty well who their enemies wuz. Thar wuz Jedge Sours, up in Hinds; they run him clean off, and burnt his housens, and tuk his pianer and his picters out in the yard fur to make targets outen. But I kinder felt hull-footed when I heerd that 'ar, fur he'd wanted secession so bad his teeth wuz loose. *He* could whup a hull cow-pen full of Yankees, and mind the gap, *he* could. He would fight a saw-mill, and give it three licks the start. But when [illegible] passel of cavalry fellers come a trottin' into his yard one mornin', the way he lit outen them diggin's wuz a caution to tom-cats. He wuz that bad skeered he run plumb agin' a yaller calf he had, but he wuz half a mile off befo' he heerd it blart."

"Ha! ha! He was considerably cooled, then, before the surrender came."

"You could a' tuk him out through the stitches of his breeches, he wuz so small. I seed him 'bout a fortnit after his housens wuz done burnt, and he looked like he'd let a bird go. He's the wust whupped man in the lay-out, I reckon. Now, thar wuz his neighbor, Cap'n Jarnley, he wuz a ole-line Whig, and went agin' secedin' original; but when he seed 'twuzn't no use, he lit in, and he fit till the hull kit and bilin' busted up. I never seed a man keep his dander up so. He wuz like the dog said to the cat, when he seed her tryin' to pull a mouse out of the hole by nippin' onto the eend of the tail—'you must purr-severe."

"If everybody had been as obstinate, the South would have won, perhaps, and the result would have been more agreeable to you."

"Well, now, stranger, you're sorter feelin' under my ribs. I reckon a man had a leetle ruther see his neighbor's housen blowed down as hissen. But I've often thought, kinder to myself like, mebbe so 'twuz better as it turned out. If we'd gained our freedom, us po' men would a' been like little dogs in high oats."

"How so?"

"Well, all the big secessioners as had niggers, would 'a made laws for no man to vote 'less he had niggers; then they'd tuk away eddication from us; then they'd jest held sticks for us to jump over, like trainin' pups."

"But now that the negro works for wages, like white men, every tub will stand on its own bottom."

"Well, you see, when a nigger is hired, it's mighty nigh as if he wuz a slave agin. They knows they is onpleasant to white men, and that 'ar makes 'em sorter meek like. A secessioner, as is alluz used to slingin' his orders round promis'cus, ruther have a nigger he kin cuss, as a white man that kin do his own cussin' back again. Us po' men is 'bout the most independent people ever was, I reckon; and they ca-ant feather their beds off of *that* goose without gittin' some squawkin'.

"But they all say now, they want to see the negroes sent out of the South."

"Well, you've heerd a 'skeeter on a bull's horn befo' now, I reckon. They want niggers to stay bad enough; and most of 'em haint got no mo' use fur we po' men than a coon has fur Sunday. That's what makes niggers sech a cuss to us. And any furriner as comes hyur in reggard of benefitin' of hisself, he's a comin' to a goat fur to git wool. If the niggers alone wuz agin' us we could scratch out a livin'; but secessioners and niggers both—that 'ar's too many coons for the pup. You ca-an't have two blackbirds a pickin' the back of one sheep; and so long as niggers is round, us po' men's not gwine to git any work."

"But I think you can find enough for both to do."

"I reckon thar's enough; but niggers works cheaper anyhow. They lives jest on corn-bread and meat, and no white man ca-ant do that: he wants a change, as the bar said when he wuz tired of man-meat. But niggers is the most triflin'est, no-'countest, low-down bein's on the face of the livin' yearth. Jest let a nigger drink as many new malasses as he wants, and ride the gates, and he's happy as a lizard onto a rail."

"But I see a good many white folks, who, if not riding the gates, are at least in the house most of the time."

"But the secessioners has all the land, and the niggers gits all the work; and that 'ar gives a po' man '*casion* fur meditatin' a good deal in a settin' postur. All them things together makes the ile onto our soup powerful thin like.

"Now, speakin' of niggers, thar wuz a little circumstance happened hyur as shows how worthless they is. Thar wuz a couple of shoats of 'em a livin' together in one cabin with both thur families about two miles over towards Yallobosh, which folks never made out what they lived onto. They never done no work, not a lick; they didn't beg nuthin', and they hedn't nuthin nohow, only the housens they lived into. Facts, I wuz too fast; I orter said they had two guns, and two or three pistols.

"Well, one day them two niggers they went out for to hunt, as they said. 'Pears like they made thar livin that 'ar way. They hunted an' they hunted, and they couldn't find nuthin' but a cow belongin' to one of my neighbors. They shot the cow, bein' as they couldn't find nuthin' else, and then they commenced a skinnin' of her. But 'pears she jumped up all to wunst, and hooked 'em both to death! Leastways that was the story roun hyur. But the curo'usest thing of all wuz, she gored 'em both into the head, and the holes wuzn't bigger'n my little finger, and went plumb through.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE DOLEFUL FLATS.

WHEN I arrived in Vicksburg, I entered in my notes this:—Starting at Raleigh, where Sherman ended, I rested in Savannah, where he rested, and am now in Vicksburg, where be began. The track which, with the mobility of an ancient conqueror, he drew eight hundred miles through the rebellion, I have traced by the echoes of his dreaded and hated name. Six weeks I have listened, with what patience I could, to the story sounded nightly in my ears of the pullets and the breastpins filched away by his bummers. Many have been these "tales of a wayside inn," but, instead of the birds of Killingworth slain in one of them, it was that identical turkey-cock killed in all of them, by swallowing a Federal ramrod.

To-morrow I will walk by a way which Sherman never marched in; and then I hope to hear these accursed hen-stories no more. Yet I feel that my self-immolation has been productive of benefit, for it seemed to do my hosts good to find some new ears for their grievances.

A sable Charon ferried me over Old Soap-suds, on whose vast bosom somewhere it always rains. He was a greasy, sleepy pot-wolloper, and nearly capsized his wretched craft by missing his stroke in the water and falling flat on his back.

I scrambled up fifteen feet of stratified muck and turned to look for Vicksburg. But a dense fog, swirling up the river, had buried boats, wharfs, and city, and I only caught a glimpse of the highest building floating like Nephelococcygia on the clouds.

Along the bank there was a row of little negro-huts, miserably cobbled of driftwood—the sole occupants of the deep, dense, mahogany soil. They are planted thus close to the river so that, in those days when the Mississippi covers States, and all the mules are ranged along the levee, braying piteously to the passing steamboats, and nibbling each the other's tail of burrs for lack of hay, their wretched tenants can flee away in skiffs to Vicksburg.

Opposite Vicksburg there is a long and narrow peninsula. Hence, in a winter flood, the river surges with stupendous force over the bank, but chiefly at the neck, where the current bowls straight upon the land, and leaps all levees in a mighty lunge, sweeping down gigantic sweet-gums of centuries growth. A mile or two back from the river the road plunged into the original forest, and there my tribulations began. Enormous gullies were ripped in the ground, as if the truculent river-god, wroth with men who had dared build railroads in his domains, had not only demolished them, but swallowed the very ground underneath. In other places this demon of floods had climbed up the embankment, seized the detested track, and laid it over, unbroken for rods together, high upon the bushes.

The water of the lower Mississippi is said to be the heaviest fresh water on the continent. Certainly it is, if the amazing strength with which it hurls and wrenches iron rails is any indication.

In a dense canebrake I ran on a bear nosing about. With a frightened snort, he tore away, smashing down a wide, cracking swath of canes. There were the most execrable, scratching thickets of dewberry creepers, trumpet-flowers, elders, and all manner of brambles, rasping and tearing me at every step.

Here the negroes are beating down the burrs in a cotton-field, scarcely visible in the bristling tangle. How lusty is the burden of song they thwack along the swath! A negro's poetry, like his religion, is all in his arms and legs.

Let any one wade from Vicksburg across this dreary flat in winter, and he will then possess a lively conception of the vastness of the valley of the Mississippi—and not till then. And when sixty miles from Vicksburg, he still sees the mark of its yellow grip upon the trees, and, seventy-five miles in the interior, still has to answer the planter's anxious question, "What is the river doing?"—then does he begin to comprehend the greatness of the Mississippi.

And here I saw a strange sight, one that I never saw before. It was a negro on horseback. And—what was stranger still—the dogs that followed him were not the wretched curs negroes keep, but blooded hounds. His horse was sleek, and himself of a noble physical stature, portly and majestic as any cotton-lord. He owned a broad plantation, and spoke with that gravity which is given to the possessors of the soil. Mark what he said:—

"Perhaps one half of my race have the will to make an honest living. But not one third of them have judgment enough to keep land, if they had any. It would speedily pass out of their hands. But the white man is as much to blame as the negro for his laziness. I work with my men in the field, and they do me twice the labor they do for a white overseer."

I journeyed several days with an old negro, named Tookey Smoot, who was going to Texas. He had a sad and melancholy history. He and his wife and a little daughter were slaves in Vicksburg when the war broke out, but he contrived to escape, and enlisted in a colored regiment. He was present at the siege of Vicksburg, and with his captain's glass, toward the last of the siege, he could see his own little cabin, with the morning-glory trailing over the back-window, just as it did when he left it two years before. But his wife and daughter were hidden in the caves with their owners, and, as he looked day after day and saw the cabin always deserted, he thought they were dead.

They had almost perished from famine in those dreadful months, and when one day the thunder of the cannonade stopped, and there were whispered rumors of a surrender, and his wife and daughter crawled out into the sunlight once more, they were dazed and blinded. They sat on the top of a hill, and eagerly watched and waited. Tookey's wife was determined, if the cannonade commenced again, she would sit there and await the coming of a friendly cannon-ball. At last "little Jinny" his daughter, spied the flags of truce, and cried out:—

"O, mammy! They're shakin' out their table-cloth, aint they? It's been such a long time since we shook out our table-cloth, aint it, mammy? Papy will come now, and bring us a piece of bread?"

Then at last Tookey marched in with the troops, past his old cabin, where his wife was waiting for him. She knew him a long way off, and tried to run and meet him, but fell to the ground. He lifted her tenderly in his arms, while "little Jinny" clung around him; but at that last moment of supreme happiness some fatal bullet pierced her heart as she hung swooning in his arms. And, to fill his cup of sorrow, "little Jinny" died in the freedmen's hospital.

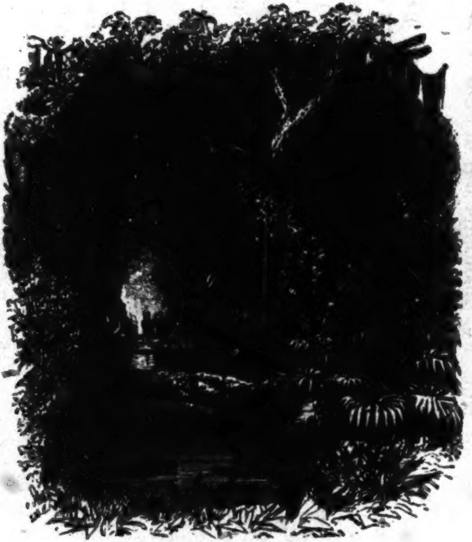
Poor Tookey was utterly broken-hearted, and wept like a child while he told me this sad story. Yet, with the buoyancy of his race, he would be passing merry at times.

Nothing could be more ugly, more dismal, than this bayou region. Long naked grapevines swing down from the vast cypresses, through which the wind swoops with an inexpressibly ghostly hollow moan. Either there are no birds, or they partake the sullen spirit of the woods. There is one poor little songster, known only to Audubon, which seems to be acting as a land-agent, and constantly chirrups, in a most doleful strain, "Soil, soil, muck, trees, trees!" There are not even the windrows of leaves, brown and russet, raked by prankish winds, but all the ground is strewed with the wrecks and rubble of the freshets. And then these snaky bayous, wriggling in the yellow muck, arched over with gloomy gray cypresses and funereal moss!

One day, late in the afternoon, we came to the worst bayou of all, choked up with bridge-timbers and driftwood. The bridge was gone, and the raft was on the other side of the bayou. I shouted to a negro who was far away on the other side, then Tookey took up the refrain, then I yelled again, until I was "out of all whooping."

It was rapidly growing dark; the long moss overhead began to sway with a mysterious and ghostly motion, presaging a storm; and the hoarse and eldritch screams of the owls were echoing with a most dismal reverberation among the cypresses. Poor Tookey was so frightened that his teeth actually chattered.

A piece of timber floated idly in the edge of the bayou. By much persuasion I induced Tookey to get on it, and attempt to cross over after the raft. He crawled carefully on it and then slowly raised himself up into a semi-circle, looking like a circus monkey, and was about to poke the water with his pole, when pop! the treacherous log bob-



THE BAYOU REGION.

LIVE-OAK GROVE.

bed over, and with a shuddering "O, Lawd a massy!" poor Tookey soused in head foremost like a bullfrog. He grabbed his hands full of muck, and just as his woolly head emerged, I heard an owl laugh like a fiend.

Tookey scrambled out, and laughed. "Well," said he, as he held his head over and thumped on the other side, to knock the water out of his ear, "de moral tale dat I induces from dis fact ob de succumstance is dis:—'When you can't git along in dis world a standin', you must git along a settin'."

With that he leaped courageously astride the log, paddled it across, and brought the raft. When we finally got across the bayou it was pitch dark, and I could neither keep the path nor find any house.. After much forlorn groping, I crept into a gin, and upon a downy heap of cotton slept snugly.

Though it was the third year after the war, no healing hand of reconstruction had touched this dismal region. Sometimes I would see a few fowls or domestic animals wandering vacantly about the cabin, with a strange shyness in their actions. as if they felt the house was haunted; and when I knocked, there would be no response.

No words can describe the sense of loneliness I felt when wandering among these deserted hovels, where the fowls had been left without a master. The poor creatures seemed frightened by the long silence; and they would run away in mute terror, or stand at a distance, watching, without uttering a single sound, as if under the spell of some ghastly spectacle of death or murder. I have been moved almost to tears by the mournful pleading gaze which the old house-dog, left all alone, turned upon me as he ran away a little, and then stopped to look back.

Again, I approach a squalid hovel, where two or three children are playing in an unnatural silence before the door. A faint voice invites me to enter. The floor of the only room is trodden with mire, and all the household utensils are strewn about. Both father and mother lie on wretched pallets, the fever-flame slowly wasting in the socket; or, perhaps one lies already sinless and pallid with the "white radiance of eternity." The dim glazing eyes of the living are turned upon me, and I faintly hear:—"We wanted to earn our bread, but there was none to hire us."

God, pity the white poor man in a land where labor is black, and the black man in a land where weakness is a crime!

And the houses of the strong—where were they? And the strong themselves? "O Rome!" cried Lucan, as he wandered through the ruins of the civil war, "O Rome! destroyed by Roman valor!"

In South Carolina, even in those places which the flames of war wasted for forty months, there were never lacking witnesses, living witnesses, of their times. There were always blacks in the little colonies of cabins who knew the history of "Ole Marse," and could relate the traditions of the two spectral chimneys that stood among them. But here I wandered through street after street of these humble villages, which once were musical with the cackling of little pickaninnies, and the weird mournful voice of singing women; but they were now silent as the grave. Sometimes a negro child crept stealthily among the wrecks of the cabins, with a crouching tread, so unusual for a black in daylight, as if afraid of hearing its own footfall, and shivering in the dank blasts of winter. "Poor Tom's a-cold."

But where were the others? Ah! when the Mississippi shall give up its teeming dead; and when the forgotten multitudes who sleep in unknown trenches shall come up through the yielding sod; then shall they appear! No loyal household in the North was disturbed in its warm woolens when each swarthy corpse went down at midnight, with a cold gurgle, into the Mississippi; or was carried out from the putrid camp to be flung like offal to a common infamy. No Dix or Nightingale was there in those pest-camps, to speak some sweet and soothing word to each troubled soul before it went out on its dark flight; or to drop a pitying tear for the unspeakable sorrow of the freedman, who, like poor Tookey, in the very moment of reunion and of his great joy, had seen the long-lost one stricken before his eyes, and sat now at her grave,

> "At those willing feet, that never
> More would lightly run to meet him,
> Never more would lightly follow."

When I was in Vicksburg, I visited one of the freedmen's graveyards, to which those two memorable winters of 1863 and 1864 contributed their holocausts. In the great multitude of unmarked graves, here and there was one which bore some trifling shrubs of affection. On one of them—touching emblem!—were some withered cotton-stalks. Thus Sappho relates that Themiscus laid his oar and net on the grave of his son, who was a fisherman.

One day I went with Tookey to visit an old crone who was reputed to be a Voodoo priestess. She was a withered old hag, whose occupation seemed to be gone since the negroes were emancipated, and so, with many pious prayers and ejaculations upon our heads, she asked us for alms, "jest a quarter, massa, fur a mighty little 'll do me, 'cause I'se gwine to die right soon." Tookey had nothing to give, and, from the appearance of her cabin, I was not inclined to consider it a case of special hardship; so we moved along. Then she began to heap upon us terrible imprecations.

Well, the story got out 'bout the cow hookin' two niggers to death, and of course, thar hed to be a coroner's jury set onto 'em. Me an' another feller, an' a Canuck as wusn't naturalized, and a boy seventeen years old, an' two niggers, wuz the jury; an' we went out fur to hunt fur 'em. We beat up an' down right smart amongst the bushes, but couldn't find nuthin'.

"Last the coroner—he was a right sensible cuss—says he 'boys, we'll take the testimony of this hyur feller as heerd 'bout them dead niggers, or said he seed 'em, 'an we'll swear to't, and it'll be all right'. So he sot down, an' writ out a verdict, how it happened that the niggers was killed by a cow, an' read it to us, and we made our marks to't. But this hyur Canuck, the derned skunk! he swore he wouldn't make his mark to no sich docyment, 'less he seed the niggers we sot onto. So we had to git up, an' go to huntin' agin, all on account of this ornary contrairy cuss; an' it tuk us the best part of the day to find the niggers, and set onto 'em. Then the Canuck he made his mark to't."

He knocked the ashes from his pipe, blew a strong blast through the stem, then laid it on the mantle, and added "Come, set up, stranger, and take a snook."

We place each his stool or bench around the table, which the fat pine fire lights up more gorgeously than many-jetted gas. There are the roast yams from the ashes, delicious as can be eaten only in Mississippi; chitterlings; and bacon with cabbage. If the reader knows what chitterlings are, the word is enough; if not, let it suffice to say they are sausages. The cabbage, or collards, boiled with bacon, are a *materia circa quam* for a good deal of sport-making by Northern travelers, and over them a great many noses are daintily turned up—and justly, when the dish is prepared by the negroes and the lower class of whites. But, after all, it is a dish which was served up to Jupiter himself, as recorded by Ovid, in "Baucis and Philemon."

Supper is dispatched in profound silence. Then the woman sits by the chimney-corner, rests her gaunt, sallow elbows on her knees, leans her head upon her hands, and sucks her snuff-swab. There is an hour or two of talk, with many a stupid pause, and many a long, clownish yawn from all parts of the house. Then the family distribute themselves in various beds and "shakedowns." I decline any of them, and, being somewhat modest, am obliged to look hard at the fire till there is profound silence in the rear, indicating that the transition has been effected. During the night there is an ominous mauling and scratching in the bed-quilts, and occasionally a faint squeal from a child, when the attack is heavier than usual. But thanks to the good ventilation of the cabin, I make a tolerable night of it in the only rocking-chair.

Tookey was frightened beyond measure, for his superstition was involved, and he begged me to give her something, for he said the curse of this old woman would bring upon us the direst vengeance of heaven. To pacify him, we went back, and I gave her a small piece of the current paper of the Republic. This appeased her wrath, and Tookey evidently felt much relieved in his mind. I started on again, but he still lingered, half-fascinated, half-terrified, like a charmed bird, as if fearful he should leave her with some evil spell on his soul. They talked earnestly and mysteriously together many minutes, and when he rejoined me, he said she had offered to sell him a ticket to heaven for ten dollars. He regretted exceedingly that he had not that amount of money.

As nearly as I could penetrate Tookey's mind, his belief in regard to this old hag was, that she was an agent of the devil, or at least empowered to inflict upon men the direst torments of hell; and yet could insure his entrance into heaven!

Yet, away from these miserable superstitions, Tookey was a sensible negro. One day we stopped at a plantation, where the simple fellows, gathering about, and finding I was from Vicksburg and a "Yankee," wanted a speech. I commissioned Tookey to speak in my behalf. Mounting a barrel, he launched forth:—

"I tell you, you tinks you is free, but you an't, say what you is a mind to. You is slaves ob laziness, slaves ob pride, slaves ob ig'nance, slaves ob—ob havin' no money. Git you some chickens in de coop, a sow an' pigs in de pen, git yer wives some clean caliker, some book-larnin' in you' heads, an' some money in you' buckskins,—ef you got any—den you is——

At this point of his oration the barrel head collapsed, and he dropped down on an old goose sitting at the bottom. He pitched forward with the barrel around him, and the goose seized his wool, and commenced hammering him with her wings, to the infinite amusement of his audience. At last he got up, beat off the goose, scratched his wool, and let off his pet phrase:—

"De moral tale dat I induces from dis fact ob de succumstance is dis:—Slavery was jest like dat 'ar goose; when freedom come, we jest dropped plumb down to the ground, and ole marse, 'stead of dividin' up de land an, helpin' us, jest jumped onto us, like dat 'ar goose," shaking his fist at it—"dog-on yer picter, you old lightnin' sepulchre dat lays rotten eggs!"

The planters of the Mississippi valley proper are something more reserved and frigid than those of the sunny "homes of Alabama." One of their number explained to me that it was a relic of the flat-boat era. Flat-boatmen coasting along, or walking home from New Orleans' far from home and its enforced morals, sometimes shamefully forgot the proprieties of life, and abused the confidence of planters and their wives.

Yet, for all this, I know not where in all the Union we may better seek for one bearing—

> "The grand old name of gentleman."

You shall see him in the public bar-room of Monroe. He comes in his broad-brimmed hat, and his honest Kentucky jeans, and his "cotton-bale solidity of suavity." The habit of authority sits lightly upon him. The soul of serenity is in him. The election of the people is more unerring than the investiture of courts. The "Count" or the "Duke" may be a born churl, but your "Judge" or your "Colonel" seldom.

From the Washita to Red River it is much like Georgia—red-clay hills and piney-woods, inhabited by a hearty and manly race of planters.

Shreveport has a most admirable location—a natural bench of bank for its wharf, and one a little higher up, safe above high-water, for its business. Most of its stores are little, raw-looking, one-story brick houses, with continuous awnings, in the Southern fashion. The streets are laid with boards, and are full of red dust, dogs, and immense teams of huge-horned, Texan oxen, hitched to cotton-wains and lying down along the middle of the streets; while the pavements are thronged with big-bearded, sallow, gray-coated Texans.

I went up to an editor's sanctum to get some exchanges; but there were only three, and they were under the editor, who was asleep on his back on top of the table. I went out and staid an hour, "assisted" at two dog-fights, one cock-fight, and a negro revival meeting; then returned, and found the editor picking his teeth with a bowie-knife. He gave me all the old papers he had, and invited me to take supper with him.

* * * * * * * *

Did Grant and Lee terminate the "irrepressible conflict" at Appomattox? the thoughtful patriot, who travels in the South, will often ask himself. Doubtless there will never be another general appeal to arms; but can we hope that the ground-swell of bitter rancors, following the mighty storm, will subside as soon as it did in England, as soon even as in Rome?

Can there ever be fraternal concord and ardent devotion to a common government in a country, of which one half is democratic and the other radically aristocratic?

But is the South necessarily and permanently aristocratic? Lacedæmonia, though only one hundred and fifty miles south of the "fierce democracy" of Athens, was built into a grim and rigorous aristocracy by the presence of the Helot slaves. The great hacendados of Mexico, too, form an aristocracy which stood on the necks of Indian peons. But there is Italy, where no slavery exists, and where there is no inferior race, which is greatly more democratic than Prussia. The Italian nobility is more liberal than the German. Indeed, in the political sphere, the German is the most absurd man on earth. Above all other men, he should pray most earnestly with the prayer of Agur; for when his stomach is full, he is a courtier; and when it is empty, he is a demagogue.

But I hear the Northern objector say, now that the negroes are free, the South will gradually become democratic. Let us seek a comparison again. There is Bohemia, populated by the two races, Tzechs and Germans. There is not such a vast gulf between these two as between the Southern whites and negroes; yet the Germans are thrust down to a position of the utmost poverty, and are very rarely landholders. There is Hungary, peopled nearly equally by Magyars and Slovacks. The Slovacks belong to the great and powerful Slavonic race, but, being thrown among the superior Magyars, they are trodden down infinitely below them, into a squalor and degradation worse than the negroes ever were in as slaves.

Just so long as there are negroes numerous in the South, with their admitted and incurable inferiority, whether bond or free, just so long will the few put their hands on their shoulders, and lift themselves up, and tread down the many. Just so long as there are negroes in the South, whether bond or free, just so long will there be a "poor white trash."

Then consider the effect on the negroes themselves of this most unhappy mingling of races. Everybody who has been much in the South has doubtless often heard one call another "you nigger," or "you black nigger." Would they do this in Africa? Why not? Because there are no white men there. They would not do it here, if it did not sting. How can a negro reach the highest things which are possible to him, when both white and black are ever ready with this brand to scorch the wings of his ambition?

I think I can claim, without egotism, that I sought out the poor whites in their homes more faithfully than most travelers in the South have done. I have seen and felt as few have cared to, the saddening ignorance and apathy of that class, and the unspeakable mischiefs and miseries that grow up from the juxtaposition of the races.

And yet there is a remnant of good blood in these men, good fighting blood. It was these same stolidly apathetic and ignorant men who fought the battles of the rebellion. And who of us can forget the keen and bitter anguish with which we beheld that despised rabble break our noble legions in the day of battle, when the miserable bungling on the Potomac turned their magnificent valor into shame.

It was some small consolation, and yet a most saddening reflection, that these were Americans all, and not foreigners. As I have wandered at midnight over the bloody and shot-torn sward about Atlanta, where thirteen times beneath a summer's sun these intrepid fellows, though guiltless of the wicked rebellion, had charged the very intrenchments of Death, and where the placid moon and the stars looked down upon the pale cold faces of the fallen —brother slain by brother—I have cried, "Ah! my beloved country, how many bloody tears hast thou poured for that primal sin of bringing to thy shores a race of bondmen!"

Then came the surrender, and these haggard and wasted regiments, after serving all too well their wicked deceivers, crept back to an estate which was worse than death.

Some of them had had their eyes partly disenchanted.

They had sometimes seen the sword brandished over them with the old insolence of the cotton-lord; they had seen it swim in its airy circles with the trained flourish of the lash. They saw dimly the source of their calamities, and when disbanded, many of them wreaked blindly on lord and freedman, the guilty agent and the innocent cause, their indiscriminating vengeance.

But the saddest thing of all that sad war was its termination. The conqueror went back to an anvil or a loom on which lay only the softened malediction of the Almighty; but the conquered returned to a plough on which the negro had riveted the degradation of the curse of Canaan. The one returned to ovations, to pensions, to a happy home; the other, to humiliation, to unspeakable poverty and despair. It is a cruel and heartless falsehood to say that the degradation of the Southern poor is of their own making. As well accuse the poor of England of being oppressed by their own volition, or a starving man of dying wilfully. For my part, I have more tears for these unhappy people than plaudits for the triumph of any man who finds it in his heart to make this accusation. It were easier to break through the columns of Sherman than through the black and Canaanitish curse which rests upon the poor in the South.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE LAND OF OXEN.

ONE day, early in March, I stopped at a house for a drink of water. The woman went to one end of the piazza, and brought an ox-horn full of water from Louisiana, which I, standing in the other end, drank in Texas.

A rise in the price had set the great staple to running, and all day long the road resounded with the heavy sluck—sluck—sluck of the ponderous wheels—the big exultant laugh of King Cotton, coming to "his own again." It is a picturesque spectacle of Texas, these great cotton-wains. Six or eight oxen, which have smelt no hay all winter, stagger wearily along, sometimes leaning together by mutual consent to keep from falling. The scraggy black-jacks by the roadside, hideous though they are, are in alliance with the birds, and take copious toll from the ragged ends of the bales. High atop is perched the negro Jehu, in his "shadowed livery," with his enormously long whip, which, in the intervals of the hymns, he twirls and cracks like a pistol.

"O, I'se a marchin' down—you Darby! what a' doin' thar? I'll bust yer head if you don't come up thar—O, I'se a marchin' down to de New Jerusalem—blast yer picter, Darby!—to de New Jerusalem—you Brandy! I'll be double diddly dog-on my skin, ef ever I see sech an ox. Whoa come! —de New Jerusalem, my happy, happy home; O, de New Jerusalem—well, de Lor' bless me, ef dat 'ar steer aint fell down dead!"

When belated at night, I would run a continuous gauntlet of their camp-fires, spangling the edges of the woods, and throwing a yellow glare around the circle of shaggy heads. As soon as the oxen are halted anywhere, like veteran volunteers, they drop at once, to the order, "In place, rest," given by themselves. All along the main roads great horned skulls stare mournfully out from little heaps of bones—the remnants of some poor old Darby.

You, Mr. Ox-driver, with your Baptist and Methodist, and Rock and Brandy, why don't you throw that sapling from the road, instead of driving over it fifty times a month, with a great pounding jounce? You are the laziest man I ever saw.

The Texans have the repute of being the laziest people in the United States, and so they are, with the exception of the freedmen. One day I took the trouble to count the teamsters riding and walking; Of the twenty-three white teamsters whom I passed, all but eight were walking; but, of the seventeen negroes, all but two were riding on the cotton. There is ethnology for you, demonstrated on the ends of the fingers.

With the cotton from the Red River and Sabine counties come also the cattle from the great Trinity prairies. Fine bony steers they are, a little raw-made, perhaps, and tall, and walking as only Texas cattle can, faster than horses. When they come to a river, all the boys, and negroes, and dogs of the village collect, and huddle them about the scow, and then commences the thumping, the thwacking, the whooping, the prodding, and the shoving. Some are thrust into the boat, which moves away; others follow it till they get water in their ears, when they come back, shaking their heads in disgust, and are crowded in again by the vast mass surging upon them. Those in the boat look back and low in much distress; and then at last they all tumble in together, snorting and sighing in the cold water, and swim across, or foolishly in circles till many drown.

The Texans display a startling originality of imagination, as shown in their nomenclatures. They live, like the old Hungarian King, altogether *super grammaticam.* Witness these names in geography:—Lick Skillet, Buck Snort, Nip and Tuck, Jimtown, Rake Pocket, Hog Eye, Fair Play, Seven League, Steal Easy, Possum Trot, Flat Heel, Frog Level, Short Pone, Gourd Neck, Shake Rag, Poverty Slant, Black Ankle.

The cant term for a Texan is "Chub." I know no explanation of this, unless it be found in the size of the Eastern Texans. It is related of the Fifteenth Texas Infantry, for instance, that no member of it weighed less than one hundred and eighty pounds, while a large number made the scale-beam kick at two hundred.

"Josh" is the cant designation for a citizen of Arkansas. According to the Texans, it originated in a jocular attempt to compare Arkansas, Texas, and part of Louisiana to the two tribes and a half who had their possessions beyond the Jordan, but went over with Joshua to assist their brethren. Just before the battle of Murfreesboro, the Tennesseeans, seeing a regiment from Arkansas approaching, cried out, a little confused in their Biblical recollections, "Thar come the tribes of Joshua!"

The fierce military spirit of the South, especially of Texas, is shown in the unutterable scorn and contempt they heaped upon the shirks. In Texas they called them, with an allusion to their *ante bellum* rhodomontade as to what *we* could do, and with a side-play on the word *women* (in the South often pronounced *weemen*)—"we-men." With a reference to their brag that "one Southron could whip ten Yankees," they called them by a term used in billiards, "Ten-strikers." A man can utter no stronger approval of another's opinion than by saying "you're mighty confederate."

In the town of Henderson I made the temporary acquaintance of a young man so characteristically Texan that I give his portrait. He was slender and rather "dish-faced," as they say in Texas, with long, sandy hair, and a feeble goatee, both of which he soaped down straight and stiff. He was a dead shot with a revolver at fifty paces; had a convivial reputation; was said to cleave to his friends; and looked daggers at intellectual people.

At the tender age of twenty-one he had had over a hundred personal fights; shot to death three men, and wounded eight more; was then under five bail-bonds in one county, and two in another; had gone through the entire war; married; buried an infant daughter; and separated from his wife, who was then in school. Yet he was a man of good understanding, and was fond of Byron. So strangely is talent sometimes wedded to ferocity and indolence in this strange, fierce State.

How long, how long must I struggle to get out of these mourning and complaining pines? Where is the fabulous fertility of the South; All these thousand miles have I walked in these dreary pines, the sign and substance of poverty, save now and then, when I crossed some river valley, whose fatness was stolen bodily from the Great West.

These heavens of Texas in March are the most leaden I ever walked beneath. One wanders for miles along a sandy road, among the leafless, stunted post-oaks and the blackjacks, which are scraggy enough to scratch out the eyes of the very wind. The sand is full of iron filings, like a rubble of chopped nails; and wherever there is clay, it is of a purplish-chocolate color; and frequently you can brush away the iridescence mantling on a spring, and drink chalybeate or sulphur waters, thick enough to be healthy. Now and then there is a cleared space, faintly tinged with bleached crab-grass; and some hungry cows roam about, and lap their long rasping tongues around the maize-stalks, with a noise that sends a cold shudder down one's backbone.

But not while I live shall I forget that first norther I ever experienced.

One day the atmosphere became almost as sultry as in July, and the next day it became oppressively warm, though the sun was shorn of half his brilliance, and shone with a strange and portentous gloom. Not a breath of air was abroad in all the woods. About the middle of the afternoon, the sun was totally obscured, though there were no clouds; and the gloom, and the stillness became deathlike.

Presently I see on the northern horizon a narrow rim of cloud, perfectly straight on its edge, and stretching far across the heaven. It surges upward with appalling blackness and swiftness, but never ruffles that even margin. The forest grows dark. The cattle hasten into the ravines and stand with their heads averted from its coming. Still that dread and sultry silence. Still there is not the slightest whisper in the leaves. At last they quiver a little, fitfully, and then are still again. Now I hear a faint distant sighing, and the blast comes on with a stately tread, and the sighing deepens rapidly into a hoarse and hollow moan, which has in it more of a ghostly and chilling terror than any other sound in nature. It rushes on, not in fitful gusts, but with the solid and majestic tread of an army, and strengthens itself mightily in its outrageous fierceness. Every particle of warmth is chased away by bitter cold; all the earth is darkened; the woods howl and roar together;

> "While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
> The lingering remnants of their yellow hair."

This fearful blast lasted all that night and the next day in an unbroken hurricane, which seemed as if it would blow the very moon out of the concave. Ice was formed in vessels six inches thick.

After this experience I understood why all trees in Texas grow so short and stout; and why the people are so extremely sensitive to changes of weather, and so irritable in their tempers.

From Henderson I went over to Tyler, and then wandered widely around, wherever I heard it was, in quest of a certain emigrant company about to start for California. But I could never find it.

Waiting for a creek to fall, I staid several days with a strapping big Texan, of twenty years, and two hundred pounds avoirdupois, but with no beard, who was greatly in love, not with any damsel in particular, as I found out, but with the sex in general. His wide mouth was always ajar, and his vast loamy countenance always radiant with a smile, like sunshine on the side of a barn. He would cut brushwood in the field an hour or two, then come and sit by me, where I was writing. After twisting about in his chair a while, with the elephantine grin on his face, he would say:—

"Well, it kinder seems like 'twas every feller's duty to get mahried."

"Yes, I think every man in the South should marry, now since the war has destroyed so many."

Then I would become intent on my writing, and he would go and bring a bucket of water for his sister. Then he would return, and sit there, and lean on his elbows far over toward me, and grin.

"If a feller could only git 'round the gals. They're so all-fired cute and sassy like, you can't tech 'em."

" You don't get on well with them then?"

"'Pears like the gals are kinder skeery of me. The other fellers, 'pears like they liked 'em well enough; but when I go to devilin' 'em, or ticklin' 'em in the ribs, they flops about so I can't git nigh 'em agin."

From Tyler I went back to Marshall, passing the famous stockade near the former town, wherein so many Union prisoners died. The cemetery is just across the road, on a gentle sandy slope; and though it was more than three years after the burials, it emitted a dreadful odor. The whole vicinity seemed accursed of the Almighty. The widow who owned the land of which it was a part was obliged to sell it for a mere song, and remove her family. The bravest man in Tyler dreaded to pass it after nightfall, and many persons would make a wide circuit. There were horrible stories of ghosts that had been seen, and of spectral horsemen. It is in the midst of a thickly settled region, yet the nearest occupied house on the road was three miles away.

From Marshall I turned west a second time, crossed the Sabine the third time, and bore away straight to the west for Waxahatchie. Out of the pines at last forever, for which I was thankful; over the mighty ridges of sand; then came the last cotton-field.

Rapidly the hills melt away toward the prairies, and the great post-oaks squat low, and bow their heads toward the east, for they have fought their hard way up through many a century of wind and rain. Now there comes up far through the woods the drowsy tinkle of a cow-bell, or the lordly bellow of the bull, where, potent among herds in the unyoked glory of his neck, he writes his savage laws upon the ground. Now there skims before me a sylvan, airy herd of deer, the Graces of the woods. They pause a little way off to look at me, with their curious innocent stare, and holding their heads and tails straight up in dainty scorn. Now they are off again, and those pretty cotton-tails teeter away like the wind, so light, so long, so leisurely are their limber leaps.

Then came the prairie, the great green floor of the world; and after famishing for months on the poor tallow candles of the piney-woods, how my eyes gloated on this regal plenty of sunshine. Ah! this, this is breath.

The first man I met on the prairie wore a yellow beard, and a face that was a good wind-splitter, and rode a—*nimium ne crede calori*—"claybank" horse. The animal was as gaunt as a Canada pad that has been about a month in the Horse Latitudes, and so sway-backed that the rider's feet almost dragged on the prairie. Nevertheless, it held up its head like a banner, and so high that a line drawn from the top of it, across the rider's head, would have touched the top of its little stump of a tail, which stuck up like an ear of maize.

"Stranger," said he, reining up and taking a portentous chew of tobacco, "p'raps you mout 'a seen a red mulley cow somewhar, with a cross and a underbit in the right, and a marked cross and a swallow-fork in the left."

"I don't remember any such animal."

"Well, did you see a brown-and-white pied ox, with a overslope and a slit in the right; or a black-and-white-paint hoss; or a gray mare, a little flea-bitten, with a blazed face, and a docked tail?"

I was obliged to say I had not, and he rode away.

In the Norwegian village of Prairieville I saw a singular illustration of the truth that Northern peoples are governed more by reason and less by passion than Southern peoples. They were hoeing with negroes in the field, and even—horrible to relate!—sat side by side with them at table. Negroes who have lived a while with the Norwegians get such lofty notions that the Americans refuse to employ them. Now Germans, at least Bavarians, frighten their children by saying *Mohr* to them; and the Germans of Western Texas treat them very much in the American manner.

As you approach the Trinity, being somewhat above it, you can trace it and all its branches, like a vast tree flung down, by the gray threads of forest which wander far through the green prairie. But the valley—O moon, and ye stars, look ye on earth upon its fellow? In all that jet-black mile there was not a bush nor a leaf; nothing but a colonnade of black-washed trees. As Æschylus fancifully says the Ægean blossomed with the broken spars and corpses of the shipwreck, so did this whole mile vegetate with skids and pieces of corduroy.

But the Trinity forest is sadly memorable in Texan annals as the refuge of fleeing Unionists. Here the bear was often startled in his dreary lair by strange bed-fellows; and his savage dreams were scared by the bloodier doings of man, by the appalling yell, the clutching, the groan, the gurgle, that echoed here in those evil and memorable years of the rebellion.

It was not far from here, in Van Zandt county I think, that they showed me a place where forty Unionists were hanged on the trees in one day, all within sight of each other.

From the Trinity to Waxahatchie, all one long sunny day, the dim-seen trail cleaved before me, like the flight of an arrow, the burned prairie from the unburned. On the burned side it was all spring now with tender grass, speckled over with the nibbling myriads; but on the unburned side still lay the tawny, shaggy winter, flickering with a vivid heat.

All that long day there was not a sound abroad on the great prairie, save the booming of the prairie-cock. This conceited fowl ruffles his pretty yellow-speckled neck, stretches it out close along the ground, hoists his ridiculously little fan, which, seen from the side, sticks up like a railroad spike, and utters his love-lorn jeremiad. It is louder and more mournful than the cooing of the tame pigeon, and has a regular rising and falling accent.

In Waxahatchie I waited many weeks for the departure of the train.

Although the Trinity lies twenty miles within the prairie, on its bank you cross a thin stratum of red clay; whence it may be taken as the line between the red-clay or cotton belt, and the limestone prairie or wheat belt. Among the wooded hills of this red-clay belt you find little of the Texas of tradition, the Texas of Rangers and Mustangs, the land which has spilled so much blood for the *gusto picaresco* literature of the million. Just as in Georgia, they never dig a cellar, never teach their children to shut the door, build the chimney outside, add a breezy "piazza" to a cabin, however small it may be, generally omit the partitive *some*, seldom use the article *an*, and say "tote," "I reckon," "holp," etc.

"Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat." The Texans drive anything but fat oxen, and those who live on the prairies are anything but fat; but the foresters are by no means small, though not quite so gigantic in stature as the men of Arkansas. They have a singular bluish-sallow complexion, like a man half frozen.

We are accustomed to think of the Texan less as the ox-driver than as the ranger, the fierce, the wily, the wild, mounted on a fleet mustang. But ox-driving Eastern Texas furnished to the Confederacy several infantry regiments who were worth more than all the mustang cavalry together. In the flight of Bragg from Kentucky a brigade of four Texas regiments left behind only about a score of its soldiers; while a regiment from Arkansas, whose gaunt but bony sons are considered the most robust men of the South, left half its members by the roadside. Walker's famous division once marched thirty miles a day for five consecutive days, and left only six behind, and by this and other feats earned from the Union troops the complimentary equivoque of "Greyhounds."

Where did they acquire these extraordinary powers of endurance, if not in their manifold journeyings beside their oxen? On the other hand, perhaps the slow motions of their oxen have had a hand in making them the laziest of all Americans.

Texas, like Italy, is a land of oxen and cows, but the Texan cannot say, with Italian Corydon, "*Lac mihi non æstate novum, non frigore defit.*" A Texan once told me that his ideal of earthly happiness was to plough corn and drink buttermilk; but they have less of this supreme nourishment of genius than any other Southern State. A man with one cow drinks some milk, he with a hundred drinks none.

Despite the mercurial temperament of individuals, Texas is the most bovine of all civilized communities. Far out around the threshing-floor of Time these "ox-born souls" creep their round beneath the yoke of the Union, treading out the slow wheat of civilization, and eating unmuzzled, the chaff of many ordinances. "So many laws argues so many sins."

The people of Texas, like its weather, are a perpetual enigma, a tissue of contradictions. They have the most ponderous and complicated machinery for law-making of all our States, and they break more laws than any other.

In the war, Texas was the most backward of all the Southern States, but when the others laid down their arms, then the Texans wanted to fight.

I once knew a man who rode all night in a dreadful tempest of wind, and rain, and lightening, swimming over raging creeks at the imminent peril of his life, merely to "stand by a friend in a fight;" yet he did not scruple to defraud a white man of his six months' wages. The Texans do everything for honor, but nothing for justice.

Even in their code of morals they contradict all the rest of mankind. That code consists of two sayings. The first is, "Revolvers make all men equal." The second is the famous utterance of Houston, "If a man can't curse his friends, whom can he curse?"

CHAPTER IX.

OVER THE ROLLING PRAIRIES.

MANY distinguished authors, from Alcibiades to Burns, have owned dogs, and thought it not beneath them to teach them sound wisdom. Encouraged by their example, I have composed the following *Catechism for Texan pups*, which, in consideration of the many attachments they conceived for me, I humbly inscribe to Bouncer's eye-teeth.

Q. Why are many dogs in Texas naked?

A. Because they have the ague so often they shake off all their hair.

Q. Why is the grass all worn off the roadside in Texas?

A. Because, like "His Highness' dog at Kew," no dog ever meets another without sitting down beside the road to talk.

Q. Why does every high-toned dog, when he meets a neighbor, always wag his tail around in a circle?

A. If he wagged it straight backward and forward, the other might feel himself insulted, and a dreadful and bloody quarrel ensue.

Q. Why does every high-toned dog, when he meets another, never hold his tail slanting?

A. By holding it perpendicular, he plainly indicates that he considers himself the equal of any dog that breathes, and will not "take anything from any dog."

Q. Where do all wicked dogs go, when they die?

A. They stay in Texas.

Q. Does a good dog ever die?

A. He does not. The wind dries him up, and blows him into Mexico, where all good dogs go.

Q. What auspicious event does every prudent dog await, before he sets out on a journey?

A. He waits for the grass to grow.

If a dog cannot set out before the grass grows, much less can oxen. But the grass did grow—an inch high, two inches, three, four—and the cattle on a million acres put on their shining vernal calico, and still some emigrant had a pipe to purchase.

At last, in the first week of May, all were ready. "Starting for California." Ah! how the heart of the imaginative leaps at the mention of that magic name! It was a great day for Waxahatchie, was that day. First came the white-covered wagons, then the wild rush and clatter along the hard, black streets of the village, for hours together, of untamed cattle, and shouting galloping herdsmen—sweeping away, like an avalanche, now a hitched horse, now a lumbering wagon with its oxen. The inhabitants looked down from their windows till they were weary, went away, and came again to look; and still that glistening river of horns surged on beneath them. The little village had seldom seen a mightier or an unrulier pageant. Beef, beef, beef everywhere, and only bacon for dinner.

As one approaches the creeks which run through these prairies, one first sees far off the dark-green thread of trees rising in a slice, as through a slit in the pale-green sward. Just on the edge of these ravines crop out strata of limestone, the floor of the prairies, which old Ocean laid, and well laid, in those ancient times when Proteus led forth here his finny flocks to pastures of brine.

Here and there are curious level reaches of indented prairie, which the swinish imagination of the Texan, always on the lookout for a chine of bacon, calls "hog-wallow." Professor Riddel's theory, founded on the ancient Mexican tradition, that they were made by a terrible drought, is not satisfactory, for all the depressions are circular. They may have been made by the tramping and wallowing of the buffalo, for each hole is about large enough for one of those huge animals.

At night the herds are impounded in some settler's pen, the tent is pitched beside a brook, under a spreading hackberry, and our coffee-pot is set with its shining new cheeks to the fire. The happled oxen go waltzing off with infinitesimal steps, but the horses impatiently rear up and jump with the fore feet, then kick up and jump with the hind feet, as if they were trying a bear-dance or an equine minuet.

The outfit of our mess was Spartan in its simplicity, and wisely so; therefore we squatted on the grass around the biscuits and the rashers of "Old Ned." Strange men, just setting out on a long journey, notice each other sharply. That tall young man uses his own jack-knife, carefully wipes it, and puts it into his pocket. He must be a Yankee. No, he was "born and raised in old Tennessee."

This pale sickly man has a camp-knife, combining fork, spoon, etc. Surely he is a Yankee. No, an Alabamian. But then he never displays that camp-knife again, to be sure. It is like the boy's tin watch, whose hands always stay in the same place; thereafter its blades and spoons are never opened. It is quite too handy.

Seeing me rake together leaves on which to spread my blankets, one said:—

"Well, you certainly are a Yankee. When we were campaigning in Tennessee, we sometimes captured the

Yankee camps, and always found them so comfortable, with beds of leaves, or beds built up on crotches, whilst our boys slept plumb on the ground."

Then we rolled ourselves in our blankets, and stretched our feet toward the fire, but the negro cook put his head close to the embers. We were lulled to sleep by the music of the bull-bat and the chuck-wills-widow, such as it was, the best they could furnish.

Near Alvarado there are some prairies which it is not trite to liken to the waves of ocean. They are not like waves which roll over any earthly ocean; but such as we may imagine surge against the ancient continents of Jupiter—a hundred feet in height, and at the base half a mile in width. Across these undulations the cattle were tramping on, like myriads of speckled poppies, one herd sometimes stretching out a mile from the road toward the right, another, perhaps, as far to the left. It was an imposing panorama. Ah! who would square the circle of this great, green world upon the noisome walls of a city!

The magnificent roll of the prairie is broken abruptly off against the woody rim of the Cross Timbers; but the prairie often asserts itself in the midst of the belt, now in a grassy patch flung down, and now in a sunny glade, where the eye sweeps through a long vista cleft in the forest. Let the imagination go back with Agassiz, in his Icarian flights into the Past, and it beholds here an ocean of quiet waters, and this strip of woodland cleaving them through the midst, and covered perhaps with the progenitors of the oaks it bears to-day.

But the ichthyosaurians have long since made room for Bill Snodgrass. His log-cabin stands inside of the rail-fence circle, and in the dreary yard there is not a bush, absolutely nothing else but the pyramidal ash-hopper standing on its head. In the door sits his sallow wife, barefoot and with disheveled hair, her elbows on her knees, and her chin elevated across her hands; while a group of weazle-faced children, and a monstrous brindled dog squat about. Bill lies on the bed, under a mountain of clothes; and a neighbor sits smoking and feeling his pulse.

"Chillin' it much now, Bill?"

"You're mighty right—rattle of teeth—I—rattle, shiver—a-a-a—heavy rattle and shiver—I am—long rattle—I am, Bacon."

In the field there is some pale phantom corn among the stumps, with childish generosity sharing the ground with the sumac. A horse is in there serenely eating it, and he runs frantically to see our horses. The Texan horses learn sociableness from their masters. While I was in Waxahatchie waiting, I rode several educated nags, and never one did I ride but would stop whenever it passed another horse or horseman.

In the great valley of the Brazos, which seems to be merely a depressed prairie, it is so vast, occur the first of those wonderful pyramidal knolls of Western Texas. Some are simply truncated pyramids, others are like great earth-forts, others terraced almost as regularly as the ancient pyramid of Cholula.

In half the villages of Texas one asks one's self, why was this village set precisely here, I wonder? In Western Texas I found out the secret of their genesis.

Romulus and Remus noted the flight of eagles for the site of the Eternal City, but the Texans watch the horses. In a place where they most do congregate, they make a "horse-rack." Around this they lay out a public square for a hitching-ground, and surround this with little groceries, having square gables and awnings. The horse-racks presently become a city directory. Where there is a hewn one with nice strong pegs there is a keen trader, who walks briskly behind his counter, and has good wares; where one end is fallen down, there is a genuine Texan who will not walk the length of his counter to serve you; where there is none at all, beware of him, his butter is rancid, and his thread is rotten.

On rainy days these groceries are full of long-haired men with, suits of sheep's-gray, so cut from the web that the gray looks right across the seam to the brindle. They stalk up and down, to tinkle their great bell-spurs, and toss down their "spizerinctums" with lofty contempt, to see them stagger and spin around on the counter.

We will take the glass, and climb one of these terraced knolls by the Paloxy. From the summit the eye ranges over a maze of whitish limestone hills and ridges, meagerly grassy, and dapple with darker shrubbery. See that pair of black wolves, leisurely galloping down yonder ravine! They often look back over their shoulders. Doubtless many a calf lies heavy on their consciences. Now they walk slowly up the hill toward a group of cattle, and prowl about, wistfully stretching out their necks, and snuffling. The calves run with flying tails into the herd, and the cows advance with heads uplifted and snorting, and the marauders trot away.

Away yonder on that hillside there seems to be a monstrous black tarantula, fumbling about in the grass, as his wont is, to get a foothold for a spring. But look with the glass. Ah! it is only a herd, and the fumbling legs are the herdsmen, circling continually around.

There is not a sound to disturb this mighty solitude, except the bawling of some calves, *depulsi a lacte*, on yonder rancho. We will visit this rancho for our last drink of buttermilk. The house cowers from the buzzard ken of the Camanche beneath the spreading live-oaks, and the fence, Indian-like, skulks hither and thither. Hard by is the cow-pen, and at the end of it the narrow passage, through which in spring the yearlings are crowded, one by one, while the branding-iron is clapped fizzling upon their backs. Rawhide is pegged to the ground to dry, rawhide is stretched across the yard to be oiled, rawhide is nailed to the house to grow limber. Rawhide laces the shoes, bottoms the chairs, makes the bedstead, is glue, nails, pegs, mortices. In the morning one vaults into his rawhide saddle, takes his rawhide lariat and cow-whip, and rides out with the herd, the source of all rawhide. The others plough a little in the corn, then sit on the cow-pen, where one boy holds a frantic calf by the tail, while another practices on it with the lasso.

But these men are not wholly given over to the worship of the drowsy gods. Do you observe that scraggy pole, with gourds for the martins hung on its shoulders? There is hope of him who has a birds-nest in his soul.

One day we saw an old hermit, who had lived so long in these solitudes, yelling at his cattle, that he spoke in tones of thunder. His voice could be heard half a mile in ordinary conversation. He was of a gigantic stature, bareheaded and barefooted, and with no outer garment, save a pair of buckskin breeches, with knit woolen suspenders. In the night his cattle took fright, and were likely to break the pen, when he ran out in his shirt, in a towering passion and roaring like a lion, leaped into the pen, and emptied both his revolvers into them promiscuously. This quieted them effectually.

About nine o'clock one night we were awakened by a heavy rumbling, like that of an earthquake. We all leap to our feet, and hear the terrible cry, "A stampede! a stampede!" They are coming toward us! O, if that mighty herd, rushing frenzied with terror through the darkness, should pass over our little camp! Women and children run screaming and crying, they know not whither; men swing flaming fire-brands in the air; the herds-men around the quiet herds, to drown the noise, set up a whooping and singing.

But the frightened cattle are stopped by the fire-brands, just before they reach the cordon of wagons.

We lay down to sleep again, and Dave told us a frightful story of a Mexican whom he had seen trampled into fragments in a stampede. Scarcely had he ceased when the solid earth trembled again like a leaf, and we rushed forth in terror. Again and again did the frightened herd surge against the men, and after midnight they broke away and ran thirty miles without stopping. When a herd of Texan cattle get well in motion, the herdsmen make no more resistance, but gallop along with them till they are exhausted.

On the open prairie we experienced one of those awful storms which make Western Texas dreaded. It was toward evening, when the great slate-colored clouds began to be heaped up on the prairie, bulging up in portentous grandeur above the green world. When the heavens were all covered they seemed to settle, as if about to plunge in headlong ruin upon the prairie. The clouds far off beat the long roll of battle, and some were already spilling their thin lightenings over the horizon. But they flamed up in an incredibly short time half-way to the zenith, whence they shook down their fiery javelins across a quarter of the heaven.

The brazen belt which betokened hail, widened itself upward with amazing rapidity, as if the storm-god were running to battle with a thousand chariots of brass. The cool breath of the hail now rippled gently through the sultry calm.

Then came the fierce rush and sighing of the wind, slinging hailstones and scattered drops of rain. Many of the stones were as large as a strong man's fist, and, slung from the far heights of heaven, smote upon the solid ground with fearful violence, sometimes bounding fifteen feet into the air. The first blast of wind swept down the tent. In attempting to raise it, a herdsman was struck by an enormous stone, which pierced through his hat, and felled him like an ox upon the ground. The cattle moved off at first in a solid column, then broke into a tumultuous gallop; the loose horses cruelly mauled and bleeding, fled in terror, and vanished beyond that white and terrible curtain stretching from heaven down to earth.

There was a momentary lull in the storm, then came the rain. We had lifted the tent-pole, and with all our united strength we braced it up against the mighty torrent, while the slackened tent clung about us almost to suffocation. In oceans upon oceans it surged and seethed, and swashed around us, as if it would drown the very wind itself. It ran along on the prairie in a flood, hurled by the mad wind; it deadened even the crash of the thunder into a dull wet thud, so that we heeded it not, except when one bolt, with an appalling flash, spread the prairie close before us.

Then the rain ceased as sudden as it began, but the wind still swept along in fitful gusts. We crawled from the dismal wreck of our tent, only to see to our dismay that the rain-cloud was coming back. For a moment the wind surged on against the hot and ragged rims of the lightening, rolling blackly up and hurling back the edge of the clouds, as if to stay their return. Its struggles grew rapidly weaker, then it fell dead calm, then it turned, and that black cloud, like some monstrous kraken balked of its prey, came rushing to a second assault.

Thus we were drenched a second time, and then a third time, and the third torrent was, if possible, more dreadful than the first.

The darkness was now intense, but the lightening showed us that the storm-god was driving off his clouds. As a pledge of his reconciliation, there was a sudden lift in the clouds, and the evening star shot down a pure liquid ray through an air thrice washed.

A long time I sat in the door of the tent, and watched the magnificent glitter of bolts around him, as he drove his dark car eastward into the night. Sometimes the lightening would issue upward from a fallen cloud, so that it seemed as if a jagged flame leaped right out from the prairie. Then a half of the whole heaven would be rent with a ragged network of fissures, revealing another heaven on fire beyond. Again, a bolt would strike horizontally, and, like Acestes' arrow, burn to ashes in its flight; then suddenly kindling afresh, dart out to an amazing length, and explode into a hundred quivering stems, like a clump of fiery coral. Beside the play of the celestial elements in Texas, the most gorgeous pyrotechnics that man ever devised pale into utter contempt and insignificance. Yet all these magnificent corusations were drowned into silence by the far-off music of the storm, as Pindar sublimely says the forked lightenings of heaven are quenched in the strains of Apollo's golden lyre.

In Camanche, the uttermost end of human habitations, I saw the second country school-house of my whole journey in the South—both were in Texas—wherein the hum of the alphabet was sometimes interrupted by the crack of the Camanche rifle. Genuine Texan perverseness! What is the use of having a school where you don't have to fight for its privileges? I saw a youth, six feet and an inch in the buff, strap his spelling-book to his revolver belt, and take his little sister by the hand, to go home.

"Do the Camanches come near your school?" I asked.

"They come mighty closte sometimes; closte enough, I reckon."

"Did they ever attack your school?"

"They run in onto us wunst; they thought thar was so few houses they could skin us out, but they was mighty bad fooled. Thar was lots of bustin' big fellers in the school-house; and we waded into 'em, and skinned 'em out mighty sudden. I tuk a scalp myself, and hung it up in the school-house a while."

From the Leon westward it is a dreary and shaggy region. Wearisome whitish ridges, snarled with chaparral and cumbered with limestone boulders, shoot across great plateaus, frizzy and churlish with cactus, and wisps of thorns, and jagged dwarfish live-oaks.

In one place, at the base of a ridge, there was an acre of saltlick. The tongues of the cattle had rasped out a Stonehenge. Here was an earthen pillar, roofed by a flat rock, which you could stand erect beneath; there another, bearing atop a goodly tree.

The tender pink pellets of the mimosa, and the rich and milky morning-glory, had long since given place to the exquisite crimson and orange hound's-ear, and to the great apple-red, lemon, or yellow cactus flowers, which rim its corpulent leaves. The mawkish grass-nuts had yielded to the little wild chives, which we fried on our toothsome steaks.

Of the many varieties of cactus I will describe only one. It is a pretty bush, with branches in links, like a string of little Bavarian sausages; and every joint has a knob or boss of prickles like a small pincushion stuck full of needles.

From the Trinity westward across the prairies—that is Texas. Here the future "cow-boy" is furnished at six with a cow-whip five times as long as his body, and lifted into the stirrups. As soon as he can twirl this absurd whip without winking; follow the steer's dodges as if his horse were tied to his tail; and throw a lasso over him as he runs, he is educated. But he is not accomplished till he can clutch his hat from the ground, as his horse gallops past it, and drive the pin at thirty yards.

A little later he rides after straying cattle, and sleeps *sub Jove* for weeks, never near the roadside, never without his revolver in order. He seldom rides past a stranger without laying his hand on his pistol-butt. He dogs an earmark among a thousand others, which we could little better interpret than Mr. Pickwick could the sign-manual of Bill Stubbs. He passes unnumbered curious and crooked brands without a pause, then pounces upon one we thought we had seen before. But he is right in his reading. If not, his little one-eyed scribe will make it right.

Such another school of shrewdness, jugglery, audacity, personal daring and independence as these janglings of multiplied marks and brands, the wide wild roamings, and this constant watchfulness create, is, I suppose, not to be found on earth.

He leaps in his stirrups with frenzied delight in the maddening chase of the steer; he swings the lasso over his head in circles large and free. What cares he for the plough? The nipping air of Illinois braces the farmer strongly up to industry; but these glorious, sunny wilds of Texas, the wide, the pure, the buxom air—who would tread the stupid furrow here? Who would know any other law but himself and his fleet mustang?

The self-reliant and fiercely independent Texan is little in accord with the pacific genius of the Republic. Go out on the Brazos prairies, and you will see a clump of small live-oaks tillering from one tap-root, one being erect in the middle, and all the rest straining away to the utmost extent from every other. That is Texas.

Texas has a chivalry, but it is not Kentuckian. The Kentuckian murders a negro also, but he pays him his wages before. When we think of Texan chivalry, we think of a gray glitter in the eye, and a cold pistol in the belt. There is something dwarfish, something selfish in the Texan character; it is a kind of blue, skinny, aguish chivalry, which, while it scorns your money for lodging, will yet pinch the negro's hire to the utmost copper.

The Kentuckian adores his horse; but the Texan, though proud of a good horse, lets him gather "roughness" at the end of a picket-rope, and is too lazy to keep him in plight. The Kentuckian, like the Englishman, is ambitious to excel on the noble course. The Texan, like the Italian, delights in mountebank tricks, and in his horse's heels above his head, and rides him to death. The Kentuckian hunts often and with keen relish on horseback; the Texan, now and then shoots a jackass hare with his revolver, as he rides around his cattle.

The cavalry record of Texas in the war was sorry, compared with that of Kentucky and Tennessee. Many an honest farmer of Georgia and Alabama has graphically described to me how he welcomed the Texan rangers, with open eyes and with ears joyfully cocked up, as if they had been sons of the Anakims, come to destroy their enemies utterly from off the face of the earth; and how they were always so busy in killing and eating turkeys that they never had time to find the Yankees. Forrest weeded them from his command as Sherman did colored infantry from his army. That great summoner of small garrisons, imperious and terrible as we used to think him, more than once cringed before their drawn pistols, and dared not summon a court-martial. It is their tradition and their proud boast that no Texan was ever capitally punished by a cis-Mississippi court-martial.

It was not that the Texans are cowards on horseback, for on foot in Virginia and in Tennessee they fought with a desperation never surpassed.

It was partly because they owned their own horses, and would not expose them; partly because they were too intent on plunder; partly because they had little heart in affairs beyond the Mississippi. Texas hurled her long-haired hordes to Red River in the saddle; but it was as infantry—three fighting and one holding the horses—that they crushed the unhappy Banks. The Texans in Wheeler's cavalry made it the scoff of many rebels. Sherman d—— them to immortality; "Wheeler's cavalry are the best provost guard I ever had; they keep up my stragglers." Wheeler's famous battle-cry shows their character. When riding into battle he would cry out, "Off with your coats!" They were blue.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE WINDY PLAINS.

NEVER can I forget the feeling of saddening and utter lonesomeness which crept over me, as I saw one after another, every vestige of civilization slowly fade away.

We seldom saw now even those vanguards of Texan culture, the marked and branded cattle; and at the unwonted spectacle of a footman they would stand afar off, and gaze at me with heads high up-lifted, then turn in terror, and run for miles without once stopping to look round. Often I would be in advance of the train, and the sight of these beautiful animals—the only lingering reminders of the great world we had left behind—which we are accustomed to see so tame and confiding in man, now fleeing in such dread, and the first outlook over the great, the lonesome, the silent plains, gave me a feeling of desolateness, so sad, so strange, as never I felt before, except when from the deck of the steamer I saw my beloved country, with all that was dear to me on earth, slowly drowning in the deep Atlantic.

The first day on the plains we journeyed all day through a vast republic of prairie-dogs. Multitudes of these blue-nosed, thin-whiskered squeakers sat bolt upright as a cucumber on their chimneys, chirruping faster and faster as we approached, and winking with their little black tails at every chirrup. When we came quite near, they would drop down, with only their heads and tails visible, look a moment, then pop! the tails would twinkle down the holes.

Despite his ugliness, I like the prairie-dog, he is so thoroughly honest and simple. It is a pity he submits so tamely to the outrageous impositions of those Bohemians of the plains, the owl and the snake.

Few of us saw a living buffalo. They had gone north, to summer on the "billowy bays of grass" in Nebraska. Hundreds of dead ones lay scattered about, embalmed in unbroken and almost imperishable skins; and in one place two old peg-horned gladiators lay head to head, where they had crushed each other's skulls for some shaggy mistress. A hair-brained fellow came upon seven alone, wounded one with his revolver, then flung himself off his horse upon its back, and rode it till it drove its head hard against the iron plain in its dying agony.

As soon as we were well upon the plains, there began to be bruited through camp mysterious and dark rumors of something about to happen. "Organization," and "military organization" were the portentous words that might be heard muttered by little knots of shaggy herdsmen. The Texan mind cropped out straightway. A solemn, long-whiskered conclave of owners met in a tent, with a candle, and forthwith it was surrounded.

"No Jeff. Davis on the plains!" grumbled a short, bullet-headed herdsman.

"D—— yer organizin'! We got enough of it in the Confederacy," growled a lank ranger.

"I consider organization entirely unnecessary, superfluous and supervacaneous," protested the little Doctor, in a squeaking falsetto.

One of the conclave came forth, and whittled down to a point the purport of the business, whereat they were appeased.

Nature has a hard task here, to lead down the little Concho more than a hundred miles across this great and howling wilderness, beneath the flaming glare of the sun, where every thirsty tongue of wind will lap, then hasten to make room for another. A Claudian aqueduct were not amiss. The great trees are the bricks; the currants which yield our dry messes sundry fringes of tarts, the India-rubber bushes, the plums bending under their sour back-loads—these do the chinking. Beneath this magnificent canopy slip the thin waters, in long and languid pools, gliding among towering islands of grass-tufts, no thicker than your hat, or pontooned over with lilies for the march of Naiad armies.

To see a catfish of over forty pound's weight come flouncing out on a naked hook into this scorching and treeless desert—that seemed a strange thing. Everybody had a string of fish at his wagon-tail. We fried them under the vast pecans, and ate them with the oil of joyfulness.

The lack of water in June drives in from the desert to this thread of greenery a multitude of birds. Sometimes I would stroll on in advance of the train, and fling myself under a bush, to snatch a description, or a dustless minute for resting. If it was in the morning, I would hear the mournful Carolina dove, the mocking-bird, lark, linnet, and many others. Foremost of all would be the mountain quail, with its dominique corselet, and its jaunty plume of white, always saying in its very positive way, "Pretty hot! Pretty hot!"

All these, except the latter, belong to the prairies; but by noon there would be nothing but that songster of the plains, the cicala, with its long metallic rasping, or, perhaps, an occasional raven cawing. Presently even these would cease, and all the desert would be hushed in the ghostly silence of midnight. Then a red-jowled buzzard, having eyed me a long time, would flop heavily up, striking a bush with his wings, and their sharp winnowing of the air would be such a relief to the intolerable nightmare of stillness as is the cheerful ticking of one's watch, when one awakens from an abhorred dream.

There was an old sailor with the train, in a greasy pea-jacket, and with a bald and oily head, who afforded us much amusement. One evening he sat on a sack of flour, some of which adhered to his trowsers, and then he lay down to sleep face downward. In the night a half-starved mule came nibbling and sniffing about, and, smelling the flour, joyfully drew near and gave the unconscious sleeper a terrific nip. The hot-headed old man gave a loud squeal of pain, leaped up, and seized a frying-pan, with which he thwacked and thumped the poor beast till he chased it nearly out of hearing.

On the plains everybody has to dig a fire-pit, to save his fire from being whisked away by the wind which blows forever during daylight. One evening we encamped in rank grass near the river, somebody neglected to dig a pit, and in a twinkling a raging fire was sweeping right down upon the wagons. Everybody fell to beating it with sticks and pouring on water. The old sailor, while thrashing about, fell into the fire and had his eyebrows singed off. After swearing frantically a while, he concluded thus:—

"In this cussed country it takes two men to hold one man's hair on, and he can't keep it all on then."

At last we reached the uppermost spring of the Concho, and encamped to prepare for the dreadful jornada across the Staked Plain. Every ox, every mule, every horse, was driven into the brook, and by all devices of kindness encouraged to drink enough. Then everybody took a drink himself, sat down on the ground a while, then took another and last drink.

About two o'clock P. M. we set out, and moved briskly up a broad flaring valley, which led us easily up toward the mighty plateau. The great sun sank slowly down; all the stars, and the emigrating moon came forth, and beckoned us to follow; and the long train rolled on with majestic quietness into the thickening night.

Toward midnight the herds became restive, and surged back in vast masses upon the train, seeking to return; so there was a momentary halt for coffee. Then we were on the way again and I plodded on beside the sleeping train.

Ha! the Camanches! See them yonder, where they ride in the mystic moonlight. No, it is only the palmas, in their grimly sleepless vigils, with their great bristling heads of bayonet leaves. The little Doctor, however, thought the first one he saw was a Camanche in good sooth, and spurred gallantly upon it, with his heart in his throat, as he afterwards confessed, and clutched his revolver.

Long, long hours were they before the stars began slowly to drown in the morning light. Before daybreak I had begun to reel a little, in my sleepiness, and gazed vacantly about, seeing nothing; but, with the approach of daylight, returned to a state of dazed and bewildered consciousness. At one time I was as thoroughly asleep as a somnambulist, and to waken by degrees, with the increase of light, was a novel and singular sensation.

What a picture was that to which my eyes at last opened — the Staked Plain, gray with withered grama grass and the heather, vast, solitary, voiceless.

Many civilized landscapes, like the cup of Thyrsis or the shield of Achilles, are crowded too full of figures, and the effect is only exasperating confusion. Not so the desert. A few grim and simple touches — nothing more.

During that day a slight ripple passed over the dead sea of our march, at the rumor that one had seen fresh tracks of Camanches. Strange what a thrill runs through fifty men of valor, at the sight of a track without a heel.

All through the second night the wagons roll tranquilly on, without a halt. Along the whole line not a teamster keeps his feet. Now and then there issues from some wagon a sleepy dull croak, but the oxen heed it not. The very wagons have gone to sleep and forgotton to cluck. Now some baby emigrant, rudely jostled in its slumbers, squalls within the canvas; but presently all is quiet as before.

Like poor fuddled Burns,

> "I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
> To free the ditches;
> An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes kenn'd ay
> Frae ghaists an' witches."

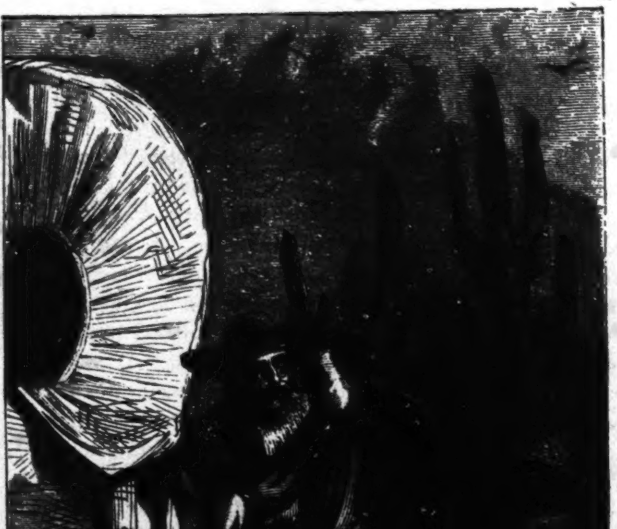
The distance we had traveled was nothing, if I could have marched briskly a while, then rested; but I was obliged to observe the snail-pace of the train, and walk incessantly. At last I was utterly overpowered. I was constantly in danger of falling under the wheels. Probably half an hour before daybreak, no longer knowing what I did, I reeled aside a little, and tumbled down beside a bush. I lay on one arm till it was benumbed and cold, then flung the other over on it, and leaped up with a sickening shudder of terror. My eyes were wide open, but they saw nothing. For at least ten seconds I did not remember a single event of my whole existence. By chance my eye fell upon a grass-tuft, and then, as the electric spark flashes from one wire to another under the experimenter's touch, so did my thought leap from that grass-tuft seen to that grass-tuft remembered, as I fell upon it in the night, and everything broke upon me in an instant. The train?—it was gone! In that instant there leaped upon me an appalling word—Camanche! I scarcely dared look around. But there were none in sight. It was broad daylight, but the desert was silent as the grave, hushed in the awful stillness of eternity.

Remembering that the Camanches often do prowl in the rear of great trains, to pick up straggling horses, I shudder to this day to think what might have happened.

The oxen now began to suffer poignantly from thirst, as their sunken eyes sadly betrayed. At noon I was carrying a canteen of water past our oxen, when one of them smelled it, and came running to me, pleading with a look of such piteous dumb eloquence, that I was moved almost to tears. By the beard of my wife's cat! old Duke, if you had never hauled my blankets a mile, I would have poured the last drop down your dusty gullet, if you could only have mouthed the canteen.

In descending from the Staked Plain to the valley of the Pecos, the road passes through Castle Mountain. This is no mountain, neither yet like a castle, but simply such a ridge of limestone as has been before described; and, seen far off, looks like the vast pile of the Tuileries. Though Castle Mountain looks so tame at a distance, Castle Gap is a pass of peril, of awful and sublime grandeur. It is as if some ocean of tumbling waters, whose bottom the Staked Plain was, and of whose beetling shore Castle Mountain was a section, had, in its upheaved and stupendous lashings, rent this jagged gorge, and rushed down the lower level.

See that antelope galloping away over yon patch of steely grayish azure! Another one leaps upon its back, like dark Care behind the Horatian horseman, and mimics every motion. At last the impostor rises so high that his hoofs no longer touch the groundling's back, but still his shadowy legs move with the same motions. And now they gallop out of that phantom lake, and presto! the upper one kicks his seeming into nothingness, and becomes even as a wink of the unseen when it is past.



A LITTLE SLEEPY

When we emerged from Castle Gap, it was after nightfall of the third sleepless night, and fourteen miles to the river yet. There was still water in the casks for the women and children, but we of the sterner sex had not had a mouthful for many an hour. I started on in advance of the train, in hope of reaching the river before midnight. The herds were many hours in advance, but little knots of the weaker ones, maddened by thirst, with eyes sunken and fiercely glaring, were still reeling along in the moonlight. One of them made a desperate lunge at me, and I avoided it barely in time to see him plunge headlong, and bury his head deep in the sand. At last I could not walk over a rod at a time, without stopping to rest. It was less the weakness of thirst than of sleeplessness and of exhaustion. I struggled desperately, for many coming jests and banters were involved, but it was of no use, and finally I lay sprawled upon the sand, helpless as any capsized turtle. A crazy steer made a pass at me, but stumbled and missed, and we lay there side by side.

When our team came up, the driver put me into the wagon, and we soon reached the river.

"Shall we have any trouble in approaching the river?" I asked of a veteran.

"You're mighty right we will. 'Less yer oxens is well broke, you'll have to put a man onto the tongue with a axe, and ef San Antone can't stop 'em, when you git near the river, whale away and cut the tongue, and let 'em flicker."

But our oxen behaved admirably. They stood patiently till they were unyoked; and as each poor fellow was released, we could see him wabble away in the dim moonlight, and see his tail whisk at the moon as he went over the bank with a stupendous souse.

Then every man made a run for the Pecos, and the amount of water which we drank was astonishing. Though it was thick with red clay, we all agreed that it was the sweetest we ever drank. Then we spread our blankets on the sand, and lay down between the hard stiff tufts of the white grass, and slept the sleep of the weary.

Next day I went back to the point where I fell exhausted, and passed over the ground again afoot, so restoring the missing link in my inter-oceanic chain.

The spectacle presented that day was appalling in its ghastliness. Many great droves had arrived before us, and thousands upon thousands of cattle lay dead about the Pecos, while all the road was white with fleshless bones. The Pecos is the very abode and throne of Death, for even the cayote and the raven avoid it, and leave the carcasses to waste away, ungnawed. Some of the frenzied animals had rushed headlong into the glittering pools of alkali, and quaffed the crystal death, falling where they stood. The Pecos has absolutely no valley and no trees, but wriggles right through the midst of the plain, which is hideous with bleaching skeletons. Scarcely wider than a canal, deep, with its banks very steep, it swept down in its swift and swirling flood, innumerable cattle and horses, which had struggled so bravely and so uncomplainingly only to perish at the last. When another train arrived, I saw a man run along the bank a mile, almost beside himself as he watched his gallant horse, which had borne him over the desert so well, now feebly struggling with his remaining strength, and looking at his master with a pleading, piteous gaze, until at last he went down in the treacherous Pecos.

When, after many days, the poor remnants of the cattle were gathered together, it was a sad sight. Of those magnificent herds which swept out so lordly upon the Staked Plain, with their long and swinging stride, twelve hundred head lay dead along the Pecos, or fed their festering flesh to its waves.

The women and children were ferried over in a Government yawl at Horsehead Crossing, and the dainty belles of the South, as well as more robust maidens, accepted the hand of a negro corporal, who assisted them into and out of the boat.

On the plain west of the Pecos there begin to occur those peculiar desert springs, the Spanish ojos, the eyes, which weep brackish tears. Far off we would see a deep-green streak, very sweet to look upon in the dusty dearth; but when we drew near, we would find the grass unprofitable for man or beast, and the ground moist-looking, or glistening with sweat of salt — a muriatic winter in the summer heats.

One of the greatest of these curious holes is Antelope Spring. Right in the midst of the level plain, without a wink, or a twinkle, or a flinching beneath the torrid glare of the sun, it weeps its miserable abundance straight up from a socket which no plummet has yet sounded.

But the name is full of significance. What the swallow, or the gull, or the tern is to the long-tossed mariner, the antelope is to him who voyages over these trackless oceans of dust. Wherever he sees it scud away before him, he knows that water is not far off.

And here I must write, though the words fly in the face of all tradition, and break a lance over the heads of all poets, that the antelope has nothing pretty except its slender hoofs. Short, squat, square, of an uncertain rat-color, with horns as stupid as the legs of a milk-stool, it runs away with stiff, chopping leaps, like those of a sheep when it runs into battle. Presently it stops to humor its curiosity, looks back a moment, then ducks its head in a quick, silly whirl, and is off again. It has acquired a reputation for beauty, as the cicala enjoyed a celebrity with the Greeks for song, because it is usually found in a hideous place.

The employer of the old sailor was a big Texan, with his trousers in his boots and a ring on his finger, taciturn, wilful, chaotic,and always leaving his herd to go to the dogs, to ride ignominiously in the wagon with a wife no bigger than his thumb; and he had no patience with the choleric but kind-hearted old man. One morning he fell into an altercation with him, drew his revolver, and fetched him a thump on top of his head.

At the next fort we passed he left; but before he went away, he came and asked me to write a letter to his motherless daughter, and dictated to me some admirable precepts. When I read to him that part respecting the dying admonitions of his wife, the old man covered his face and wept till the tears trickled out through his fingers.

The Government seems to maintain troops on the plains in order that they may commence their education, as Plato gravely advises the pupil, by studying architecture in mud. All these valorous "forts "are nothing but villages of lead-colored mud, roofed with canvas; and each house is just long enough for the soldier to stretch himself therein, like a sardine in a box.

Very unprofitable to the soldier of peace are all the uses of drilling; but to the negro it is meat not sweat for, and rejoices his soul. How serenely large and martial yon dusky Meriones paces his beat, with his shoes and his brass all a shining! Inadvertently I tread on the corner of some sacred and awful ground, when he calls out loudly, "Halt!" I go around toward him, and he looks hard at me knitting his brows with portentous sternness. Keeping his musket stiffly at a "shoulder" he says:—

"You dassent tromp on dat 'ar ground. Dat's de p'rade ground. You rebels goin' by hyur allus tromps on dat ground, an' I has orders to 'rest any man don't keep off."

Just then an officer comes in sight, riding toward us.

The negro becomes suddenly and strangely troubled in his mind. He rolls his eyes wildly; he glances first at me, then at the approaching officer. In reply to a question I ask him, he finally gasps in a whisper, looking partly as if he were choked, partly as if he had just seen a ghost, "I can't speak." All at once a light beams upon him; he sees the ghost no longer; he suddenly recollects how to do it; he whips down his gun, and "presents arms," the officer being now several paces past him.

From Leon Hole, another of those strange weeping eyes of water, flung down like bits of the sea to sweat and swelter in the plain, we set out across a forty-mile stretch without water. At sunset I sat down by the roadside to see our last day on the plains expire. And not in all the bloody climes of the Orient, where not even the daylight is permitted to die a natural death, was ever a fray so disastrous between Day and Night. The whole earth and the sky were flooded with that fierce, sullen redness, as from a burning city in the night, which closes in at sunset around the ancient Sphinx.

Late in the night the train halted. There came to us from some pond the music of those damp singers of Aristophanes—"Brekeke-Kesh! Kooash! Kooash!" But sweeter far was the clinking of the chains, as one after another, down the long lines of teams, they dropped from the tired yokes upon the ground.

CHAPTER XI.

IN APACHE LAND.

DAYLIGHT revealed to us two spurs of the Apache Mountains, straddled far out into the plain, like a pair of tongs. After traveling hundreds of miles over plains corrugated with limestone lomas, as regular as the plaits on the crimped caps of our grandmothers, it was an inexpressible satisfaction to gaze, in the early morning, upon these old granite monsters heaped up into the heavens in their lordly and savage lawlessness.

From the day we began to ascend the Concho, we were in a prickly country, but it grew steadily worse. If Doctor Sangrado cured all diseases by letting blood, a man ought to enjoy good health in Western Texas.

On the Concho some seventy sorts of cactus sting him, and forget to pull out their stingers. The mesquite rakes him fore and aft, the red and black chaparro jab thorns into him. If he would pluck a few tempting berries from the cranberry bush, red with the blood of Venus, the needles of its leaves prick his fingers. The cat-claw holds him fast, the wax-berry rips long scratches in his ankles. The junco has no foliage, except immense, green thorns. In July some of these thorns blossom into thyrses of minute whitish flowers, each thorn becoming like a spindle full of fragrant yarn. Even the India-rubber bush keeps a stock of thorns on hand.

Here, the mesquite and cactus are rarer; but all the others are in good health. If there were any lack, the bear-grass and the agave would scratch out the full tribute of blood. The hill mesquite demands its share, and even when the traveler, in sheer desperation, flees to the palma, and sits down in its tiny shade — the only shade there is — its savage bayonets stab him in the neck.

The bear-grass sends up its great scape fifteen feet high, with a head like wheat, but six feet long, though the roots burrow in the thinnest, rockiest soil. Squatting on the ground, and defended by a porcupine armor of leaves, each one edged all along with cat-claws, is the sweet cabbage or bulb, from which Bruin is wônt to make his Kool slaa without vinegar.

With one of the families there was a young wench, serving as a Jane-of-ali-work. Before the horses died or were stolen by the Apaches, she was allowed to ride; but after awhile she was compelled to walk a great part of the time. Not only was she forced to work all the time we were in camp, and often far into the night, while three or four able-bodied women lounged in their marquee, disdaining to cut the bacon, but they compelled her to gather wood while she walked, such as it was, the dry stalks of bear-grass, cheriondia, etc. More than that, the outrageous, little, spoiled brats of the family often insisted on walking, and as soon as they were a little tired, they would yell, and beat her with their tiny fists if she did not lug them on her back.

I hoped she would desert them at some of the negro stations we passed, but she never did. To see thirty or forty sable sons of Mars, gorgeous in their shining brass and their blue, with an abundance of elegant leisure to keep themselves trig, swarm around this one, poor, forlorn wench, barefooted, bareheaded, with the same dress she had worn for three months, and to see their ineffable grins, their chuckings under the chin, their snatched hugs, as they grew bolder, and their surreptitious kisses—this being the first "cullud gal" they had seen for many a month—that was rare sport.

Ah! how the sun flames and shakes down between these rusty iron ridges into this yellow valley! At Barilla Well we got a little good water, for which we gave thanks.

And now we approach that wonder and great captain of pinnacles, Washbowl Hill, where it grandly "stands up and takes the morning." On top of a perpendicular, solid washstand of iron, a half-mile thick, there is an inverted washbowl, as perfect as ever was made at Dalehall, even to the chimb.

I was sick and could not go up, but San Antone scaled it to the foot of the inaccessible washstand, and brought back specimens of apparently pure magnetic iron, which would clang like steel. In one of the awful canyons whose depths he sounded, he was surprised to hear the sound of falling waters. This would have been a miracle on that bald mass of granite in summer, and upon looking about, he found it was only the wind whistling around the sharp-cut edges of iron or granite.

Next came the famous and beautiful Olympia Canyon. It is a valley paved with gold, and perpendicularly walled with iron. Standing by moonlight in the center of this valley, surrounded on all sides by the vast palisades, which loom above the slopes of yellow grass, forming the tiers of seats, I could almost believe myself again within the Coliseum's walls, so thievish is this air of distance. Yet the valley is three miles long, and a third as broad.

But what pen can picture the simple and natural glories of this amphitheatre? Thickly covering all the valley, and all the slopes up to the palisades, creeps the ripened grass, which the sun and the rainless summer days have gilded with a gold of which Titian never caught the spell, nor Claude Lorraine the witchery, as it lies, and seems to creep and faintly shiver with the very richness of its mellowness. Elsewhere, these gigantic palisades, towering far up to the home of the "century-living crow," but shaken and shivered with age, have hurled down the slope a mighty rock, which lies now, in a sea of color which to call by the name of gold is a mockery.

In this canyon there was encamped a Government train, with its enormous blue wagons, like wheeled ships, and with it an English tourist. He was manifestly not traveling, as they say of Englishmen on the Continent, to wear out his old clothes; but he was very evidently somewhat the worse for Mexican brandy, or something else. His peon had his horse at the spring, and was vainly tugging and chirruping in his sleepy way to get him to the water, when his master bore down upon him with his face at a red heat.

"Boy, get away from that hawse!"

Then he jumped upon him, turned his head, and fetched a keen cut under his belly, whereupon, he shot away across the valley, and so around back to the spring. Then he dismounted, and led him down without trouble.

As we advance up the canyon, it draws its mighty walls closer together, till there is barely room for the road and the creek. There are little mimbres, swaying their long green hair, and bright dwarf walnuts, and vast cottonwoods, which swell almost across from palisade to palisade. The stupendous architecture of Time is here shown forth in pilastered facades, great needles, half a hundred feet high, poised on end, fluted and cluster columns, standing out in bold relief from the wall. It is the Giant's Causeway of Texas.

Then there is the Devil's Senate Hall, an easy slope, thick-set with stones like pulpits, and all among them little live-oaks. How is it that Old Scratch takes so much interest in natural wonders? On the Kanawha and the Muskingum he has "tea-tables," in Weber Canyon a "chute," in the Hartz Mountains a "chancel," etc. On the other hand, presumptuous man considers his own puny works the suggestions of the Almighty; as for instance Pope Nicholas V., who declared that St. Benedict's famous bridge in Arignon was built by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This is to say, we are little better than the Apaches, who believe that the Bad Spirit is mightier than the Good.

At last the road led us out from the canyon, and up among a thousand great grassy knolls, which the recent rains had quickened into tender green. Here, like Apollo bathing in Castalian dews and renewing his youth, we scoop from the grass with our hollowed hands the pearly arrears of months. One night we slept close under the blue rafters of Adam's primal house, snug in the crib of a deep, little, Swiss valley, and gathered the green knolls for pleasant curtains round our beds. When the moon came up, just washed in milk, it hung right above our curtain-posts; and all night long the shining tears of St. Lawrence dropped one by one from the heavens above us, and fell upon the knolls.

And this in the very heart of parched and desert Texas!

A messenger here returned from Fort Davis, and made his report. More than a hundred miles to the Rio Grande, and no water but in springs, where you might dip a gourdful. If two steers drink before us, the reservoir is dry. What was to be done? The awful lessons of the Pecos warned us not to attempt another forced march; and there was nothing for us but to wait for the rainy season, which usually sets in about the middle of July.

Then, as we sat at evening around the "green cloth" of our corral, great was he who was counted crafty as a rain-maker, and who knew whether cats look most at the cheese in its first quarter or its third. A party of us went geologizing;—

> "Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
> Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
> Amygdaloid and trachyte."

We found some pretty bits of chalcedony, and many curious specimens of metamorphic feldspar, and silicates, one-half of which had been fused by intense heat, while the other retained its crystalline form. On a rocky promontory, where persons from the fort had lunched and cast away their oyster cans, one found a piece of agate-colored flint which he insisted was a petrified oyster.

On top of the Sierra there was a granite bowlder, forty feet high, standing on the small end, like a wedge entering a log. San Antone put his herculean shoulder against it, foolishly attempting what "the innumerable series of years and flight of times" had failed to accomplish.

Up among the jagged mountain cedars there stood lordly up, here and there, a cliff of clean, clear granite, with niches for the swallows, which were flitting about in hundreds. Three hundred miles we had traveled without seeing a swallow. Could anything be more dismal?

The great pass through the Apache Mountains is fashioned just as if a strip had been cut from the Staked Plain, twenty miles long and five wide, and let down right across the mountain backbone. At either end it terminates in huge grassy knolls, where the road goes winding down to the arid deserts. Far across this green prairie, where it surges in like a sea against the base of a thousand perpendicular feet of granite, Fort Davis cowers in a corner of the mighty wall, beneath its grove of cottonwoods.

> "Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
> The city sparkles like a grain of salt."

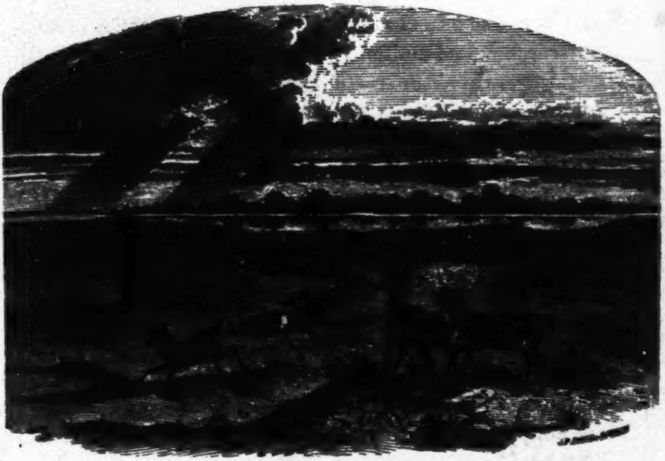
All the rocks in these Apache Mountains seem to have been scorched and molten by fierce fires. In some of those old nights, when the earth shook with her flaming and sulphurous vomit, gigantic bowlders thundered smoking down the sides of the cliff, and stand now like houses on the edge of the plain.

Beside one of these, and beneath a little live-oak, we sat to our hard-earned lunch. We sat right upon our table-cloth, which was of a subtiler texture, with lush green moss, than all linens of Morlaix or Limerick poplins. We profane this charming panorama by no *urbs in rure*; we clink no invidious silver, or glass, or china, for all those have been prone to break ever since the days of unfortunate Alnaschar. Our vessels are of tin, and made for service. How happy one can be on the plains with spring water and jerked beef!

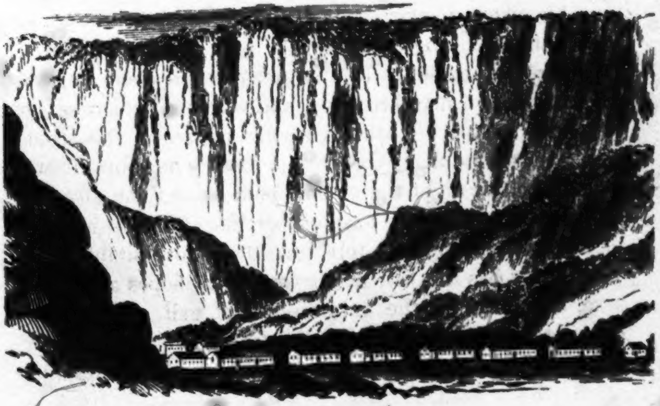
Returning to camp, we found they had been employing the time in jerking beef. Everybody had a rope stretched from his wagon to everybody else's wagon, and three whole beeves slit and hung thereon.

The rainy season, in coming on, presents some singular phenomena to a man bred in a land where it rains in season and out of season. Vast and woolly masses of fog would float overhead during the day, densest when the sun was hottest; but at night the moon would drive them all away.

Never have I seen a lordlier portion of man's heritage for lack of rain so absolutely turned to inhospitable dust. This valley has the soil of Egypt. Cantelopes grow wild here, but bitter as the quintessence of gall. The thrifty palmilla, with its long seed-stalk atop, looks like a Cromwellian soldier standing on sentry, with his halberd reaching far above his head.



A VIEW ON THE DESERT.



FORT DAVIS.

The rainy season set in on the mountains several days sooner than it did here, and the animals began to suffer again severely. One morning, however, we saw large flocks of cloudlets pasturing along the top of the sierra,

"Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;"

but as soon as the air began to shake with fervent heat, they were all whisked away. The first level beams of the day pierce and gnaw, like fresh coals; toward noon the heat is suffocating and stifling, like the interior of a furnace. All around us, and far through its bleak house, whose wide corridors shook with a fierce-glare, all the infinite air stood still, with a faint tremor dying, dying, as if transfixed by the sun. Vast columns of dust stalked like giants across the flaming and shimmering plain.

Then it was we beheld a curious spectacle. A cloud came up out of the south, and sailed over the valley far away, utterly alone in the sky, and compact and black as the head of Medusa, with an unaccountable quantity of hair of lightnings, blazing and crackling in every direction continually. Then others came up, and spitefully slung some drops far down like bullets into the dust. At last, to our great joy, there came up in the west a dark and mighty bank, bringing the principal rain. It ran straight up the valley, and in a few minutes we were buried in a shrilling, oozing, rushing, wet rain.

I saw men take off their hats and swing them, in a frenzy of delight at having their heads rained upon. Tom dismounted, and, running from one little puddle to another, snatched muddy gulps, though he never could get more than half a mouthful before the well-beloved Fanny would thrust her nose in beside him. The Doctor, like him who won Dorf Huffelsheim, drank the water that was caught in his top-boots.

It was well understood that, but for this rain, some of us would have perished, and all the cattle. We could have reached Eagle Spring in time, probably, to have saved most of our lives, but it could have been of no avail to the animals.

Journeying through the greater part of the night succeeding the rain, we beheld in the morning a natural pageant whose equal I do not expect to look upon again on earth. The sun had just risen into a notch in the sierra, when with remarkable suddenness there stood up on the opposite sierra a rainbow, than which not that on which the bewildered eyes of the lonely family on Ararat first gazed could have been more gorgeous. All the seven colors of the spectrum were broad and transcendently bright, and even the secondary was more brilliant than any rainbow of common atmospheres. All the space within the arch was gorgeously illuminated with orange, which, reflecting on the rocks below, tipped them as with shining gold. This is no poetical fancy, for they actually gleamed, with a brightness equaled only on the rims of clouds sometimes. The sky outside the bow was dun with heavy haze, and still dim in the morning, and the sun shining through the gorge, only illuminated so much of the sierra as the rainbow spanned; so that all the rest of heaven and earth assumed, by contrast, the weird and portentous gloom of an eclipse.

Only a moment, one brief moment, a pendulum-beat of eternity, it stood before us, like a beatific vision seen by Dante; then the sun buried itself in the thick vapors, and it was gone, and dull time began again.

To this day, when I look back in memory upon that rainbow, so great, so glorious, so beautiful, in that lonely desert, my eyes fill, as then, with the tears of a joy that cannot be uttered. Homer says even the immortal gods gazed with rapture on the grot of Calypso; so, on the other hand, it does seem to me that not even when we walk down through the august chambers of Paradise, will our eyes behold more grandeur.

Still we were traveling down between the parallel sierras, with the herd ahead again, pushing hard for the Rio Grande. After a weary night's march, one morning I saw Fanny standing by a bush, a little distance from the road. What can have happened to Tom? I wondered. Approaching carefully, I found him prone on the sand, asleep, but holding the bridle in his hand, and Fanny treading over and about him as reverently as Jenny Geddes trod over poor drunken Burns. When she saw me, she gave the merest little whinny in the world, as if careful not to awaken her master.

Four miles the wheels ground, and grided, and screeched along the gravelly arroyo which runs through the pass into the valley of the Rio Grande. It is a savage and bristling hole, with every stone in it stained with blood, and we went through with bated breath, and every man with his musket on his shoulder. What are those moving objects away up yonder on the white cliffs, so high that they must scrape the sun of a morning? Bring the glass to bear. Ah! three Apaches dancing on the rocks, and flouting us with unseemly gestures. A long Enfield sends a bullet hurtling somewhere through those old, upper solitudes, and the flouters suddenly act as if they heard something.

* * * * * * * *

To any man of ideas the existence of a soldier on the plains is "the weariest and most loathed worldly life," the most complete canker of the soul, that can be conceived. To the soldier in Europe there is often little better offered; but any human being who can be content in the ranks of our Regular Army, while all this great world is spinning "down the ringing grooves of change," is only one degree removed from the beasts that perish.

And then, precisely when it is least expected and least prepared for, comes, at daybreak, the horrid and heart-sickening yell of the Camanches; the wild swoop through the camp; the stinging bite of the swift and quivering arrow; the frenzied panic and clutching of weapons, but ever too late; the flight in retreat; the hasty pursuit, where the half-starved cavalry horses are goaded through the fiendish *chaparral*, until they are torn and reeking with bloody sweat, in the useless attempt to overtake the swift-footed ponies; the blind and blundering lunges in the darkness among the bowlders and the horrid brambles of the mountains, until at last some poor fagged brute plunges headlong, and, by a merciful fortune, dashes out its brains on the ledges.

Then they set out to return, many on foot, cursing the miserable imbecility which kept them rotting in camp while the savages were preparing their death; without trophies and without provisions; maddened with hunger and a raging thirst; until some fall in a delirium, and die in the desert.

What we need most in the Indian service is, men who will be inflexibly just, and then, if necessary, strike, and strike home. The English in Canada, are not troubled by the Indians. They are not so plagued with sentimentalism but that they can occasionally shoot a savage from the cannon's mouth; and, by thus sacrificing one life, they save the dozen Indians and the half-hundred white men whom we murder by our wretched, half-hearted method.

And, while I shot one Indian from the cannon's mouth, I would shoot two of those miscreants, agents, traders, and the like, who by their cheatery and their swindling, stir up trouble on the border.

Be just to an Indian, but never be generous. Generosity they take for weakness. Our republican form of government is the best in the world for its own citizens, but the worst in the world for outsiders, and especially for savages.

It is little wonder that soldiers desert from a service so grossly mismanaged. More than once, in my long journey, some pallid and haggard wretch—his knees trembling and his voice quivering with the pangs of hunger—hesitating, retreating, and giving me searching glances, as if with his eager hollow eyes he would read the very record of my soul, has at last half-whispered the dread secret that he was a deserter. Whatever I might think of his act elsewhere, I could not expose him in the deserts of Texas.

CHAPTER XII.

UP THE VALLEY OF ONIONS.

FROM a foothill of the Sierra Blanca, covered over with spiny tussocks of spear-grass, I looked down upon the mighty valley of the American Nile. The sun was momentarily hidden in the clouds, and the dark, and sterile, and rigorous grandeur of that prospect I have never seen surpassed.

Away over yonder are the blackly magnificent and savagely gloomy mountains of Chihuahua. And that is Mexico; the wild and bloody Ishmaelite of nations, the Battle-God's Elected; the ancient and perennial dwelling-place of Assassination; the home of stealers of asses and kidnappers of men, of sellers of justice and buyers of salvation, of merchants of revolution and farmers of superstition; a land of the most gorgeous natural landscapes of the Occident, wherein the children, by their candy skeletons, are made familiar with figurative death; and the most inhospitable and burning deserts, wherein they struggle face to face with actual death, but yet take away bread from the mouths of the living to make rusk for the spirits of the dead; a land of dark-souled treachery in the men, and wondrous, dark-eyed beauty in the women; always enchanting, always disquieted, always unhappy Mexico, forever "wedded to calamity" as to a bridegroom.

We were all that afternoon traveling down the gravelly desert to the river. There was no green thing on this desert, excepting the cheriondia, a pretty bush, with bright sea-green leaflets, which, when they are crushed, give forth an amazing stench. Few and far between were bunches of that strange mountain shrub, the tasajo. At a distance a clump of it looks like a number of Mexican lances planted in the ground, some of them reaching up fifteen feet or more. Approach closer, and you have wax candles, spirally wrapped with slips of green paper, thickly set with clusters of thorns and minute stemless leaves.

The sun had already been "welcomed with bloody hands to a hospitable grave" beyond the mountains of Mexico, when we reached the Rio Grande. Leaning over the low, steep banks, we dipped and drank its waters. Then it was I learned to appreciate its name. In my mind's eye I saw the first thirsty Spaniard, who, after journeying long ago across some infinite desert of Mexico, laid himself down upon the bank, and quaffed the fertile waves. Then rising up, with the deep, and quiet, and unspeakable satisfaction of a thirsty traveler who has drank enough, he murmured its pompous name—"O Great Brave River of the North!"

But how strange is this—a boiling, rich, and rushing river, bounded by absolute and unmitigated dust, and that dust by a desert! A Nile running through an Egypt twenty rods wide, in the middle of a Sahara twenty miles wide.

We encamped here a short time to recruit ourselves and the animals, and I shall take this occasion to introduce the reader to the members of our mess, the Nothing-at-Steak.

First there was the sunny-tempered, golden-haired Tom, a consumptive, poor boy!—seeking yet a little lease of life in this "diviner air;" as egregious a Rebel as ever rode after Wheeler in his marauding raids, and withal as light-hearted, as merry, and as noble a soul as ever inhabited the flesh. Poor Tom! He was much wasted by the fell destroyer; yet he was the very soul of the camp, always full of fun and jollity, and, in all mud, in all miseries, kept our mess ever gay. Ah! Tom, you Rebel, if anywhere in this wide world, or in Texas, you still live and joke and laugh, I shake your spiritual hand across this table; but if, alas! you sleep somewhere beneath the sod, I will say, dear Tom, that no truer, manlier, and more joyous spirit ever fought in that sad, sad war, in either army.

"Oh, looking from some heavenly hill,
Or from the shade of saintly palms,
Or silver reach of river calms,
Do thy large eyes behold me still?"

His partner, Joe, was a tall young man, who always ate with his jack-knife. He had a Yankee closeness, singularly united to a Southern contempt for labor, but he was a good horseman, and a faithful herdsman. He was correct in his morals, never swore, and his talk was of steers.

The Harlequin of the camp was the little Doctor. By birth, the only and petted heir of wealth; by nature, a "huge feeder;" by practice, a printer; by after-thought, a physician; he was the strangest genius I ever came across. He had a sharp nose, always sunburnt, and wonderfully cold, heartless, gray eyes. He was as cowardly as Falstaff, and almost as witty, and changed his shirt every other month. No matter how early he was called, he was glum and stolid as a log till about ten o'clock, when the piston of his intellect would begin to work. He would discourse volubly and with the Latinized pomposity and ponderosity of Johnson, on medicine, or any other topic under heaven; and I never saw another man who knew so much about every possible subject, and yet knew so much of it wrong. He carried a dictionary in his pocket, and studied "on herd" and "off herd." Yet, when the humor was on him, he would sit cross-legged by the fire, rocking his body backward and forward like a dervish reading the Koran, and set the camp in a roar with his "whangdoodle sermons."

Dave was a broad-shouldered Ranger, with a blood-red face and a mighty, black beard. He rolled up his blankets every morning with a peculiar soldier-twist, so that they would stay without being tied; and he could always find a particular vagabondizing yoke of oxen when nobody else could. Dave was an exceedingly useful and good fellow, all of which he knew very well.

San Antone was the heraldic name of the greatest ox-tamer I ever saw, a German from Western Texas. I never knew another man of such fierce and amazing energy in his wrestles with the hellish brutes, and with such appalling bursts of passion sometimes, who yet was so thoughtful of his oxen. He never killed an ox, while every other driver killed from four to a dozen.

The Texans would often ride alongside a feeble calf and shoot it carelessly through with the revolver. One that strayed from the herd a few times seldom escaped being wounded or killed. In beautiful contrast with this cruelty was the tenderness of another Texan. He had a calf which could not follow the train, so he procured a green rawhide, swung it as a hammock under his wagon, and every morning the young emigrant was hoisted into it, and rocked all day in breezy comfort. The cow would stay to see the operation safely performed, then go off with the herd, but she would often come, and walk and moan beside it, and lick its little head, as if to be sure of its safety.

One day two men from another train swam across the river, *trans pilum aquæ*, invading Mexico, to steal melons. They were warned that it was at the peril of their lives, but they persisted in going. The river was at its summer flood, often half as wide as the Mississippi, and we stood on the shore and watched them. Now they would swim; then they would flounder knee-deep across an island of silt, level with the water; then swim again; and at last we saw their white forms emerge upon the other bank.

See now, the white-clad Mexicans swoop fiercely
upon them, swinging their lazos. Their infuriate
are heard, the men run, they wildly throw up thei
to parry the lazos. But the fatal nooses catch them
where, and the little mustangs gallop swiftly away i
mountains, dragging the victims brutally on the g
as Achilles dragged the fallen Hector.

We never saw them after. They were ruffians for
no one seemed concerned, and nobody cared to
himself by swimming over that treacherous river f
venge. Mexican retribution is more swift and sun
than Schiller's justice in Venice.

The hot afternoons often brought little showers,
would hover about the tops of the Sierra Hueca, but
dampen our burning heads. Next morning little fog-p
very dense and clean-cut, would nestle like pearls
niches of the intensely azure mountains. And never,
on the Arno, or the "haunted Rhine," or on the
shores of Lake Como, have I seen such a sunrise as o
Rio Grande, after a rain had softened the mountain a
phere with thin and mellow vapors. And I do her
make humble confession that I gazed upon these glo
blue mountains, tipped with orange clouds, these encha
poems of earth, in daintiest "blue and gold," lying
in my blankets. Thereby I made a valuable disco
If the reader, in beholding this sort of phenomena,
incline his head half over, he will be rewarded with a
velous enchantment of its beauty.

For ninety miles along the Rio Grande there w
pasture, and the grass-eating Texans were in a sta
distraction. But the animals soon learned to eat mes
beans ravenously, as all things do here.

See how Nature is just to all regions. Here is thi
testable cactus, worthless you will say. Pass the drop

leaves through the blaze, to singe off the prickles, and the oxen will devour them greedily, and fatten. Split some and drop them into a bucket of water, and they will clarify it as an egg does coffee. Clap a piece on your felon, and it will cure it like magic.

This and the mesquite are almost the only flora vouchsafed to this region. But these long, and silvery, and scarlet-speckled pods, growing twice a year, nourish the goats, and yield the Mexican himself a sweetish succulence like apple pummice. There is no coal hereabout, but its pretty walnut wood makes such a fierce heat the smith can weld his tire with its coals alone. Where there is only the merest sprig above ground, just under the surface there are enormous roots, which burn well when freshly grubbed.

As one approaches San Eleazario, the bottom expands into a goodly breadth of ranchos. Hoeing in the young corn were squat and swarthy fellows, cool in their umbrageous sombreros, with their white shirts pulled outside their trousers of immaculate white—it was Monday—which were rolled high above their knees. How I envied them, as they tramped through the freshly watered furrows, in the soft mud.

The Mexican plow is simply a cotton-wood branch, which makes a scratch in the weeds that look like a black snake. It has a little straight peg of a handle, which the fellow leans lazily over upon with one hand—he walking on one side of the row of maize, the oxen and plow on the other—while with the other he cavalierly flourishes his goad and husk cigarrito. There are several teams in the same row, and every time they come out to the end, they stop a while, chat, and light fresh cigarritos. Then the oxen's heads are turned into the rows again, and away they go almost on a trot. With what elegant nonchalance for a plowman that fellow elevates his chin, to whiff out a wreath of smoke. Now he looks back over his shoulder, like that exceedingly unpractical and impossible husbandman, Jason, when he was plowing with the mythological bulls.

Here, too, are the calico flocks of goats, and the famous New Mexican sheep-dogs. Wolfish, shaggy curs are they, with sinister-looking eyes, set close together, like a cayote's, which probably assisted in their genealogy. It is very amusing to see the serious, business-like way in which he marches along beside the foremost goat, and the stern frown of reproof he casts upon him, if he halts to browse. If that does not suffice to keep him moving, he gently nibbles his knees, or tweaks his wattle. The goat-herd brings up the rear.

We met carts on the road, taking wheat to market. These are deep boxes, woven of cane tight enough to hold wheat, and mounted on a pair of enormous wooden wheels, which go wabbling along as if they were ashamed of being yet on earth, when they ought to be in the grave with fourteen centuries. The Mexicans cruelly bind the yoke fast behind the oxen's horns with thongs, which destroys the free and majestic swing of their gait, and makes them travel with their heads down, as if they were running a tilt in a bull-fight. By this means, and the use of the remorseless goad, the Mexican teamster seldom travels less than twenty-five miles a day, while the Texan only goes fifteen.

The common jacal of the peon is built of stakes set in the ground, and plastered with mud, and is just the same for shape as if one should set a sharp Gothic roof, with its gables, on the ground. The ranchero makes a flat-roofed adobe, on three sides of a square.

None of their abodes are fenced, and all the ground about is perfectly bare, and hot, and dusty, unshaded by trees. Ropes are stretched across, and hung with long strips of beef, and large quantities of red and green peppers and garlic. Here there is a mud coop, there a mud oven. Kids, lambs, pups, and little swarthy brats tumble over each other in great jollity, right in the scorching glare of the sun. The merest little pod of a rascal had nothing on but a belt and a mighty dagger.

The soil here is of an incredible fertility, as is shown by the yield of wheat, and the great number of people supported on these narrow slices of bottoms. There were colossal pear-trees, bending under their puckering and miserable fruit, and plenty of vapid apples. But the black Socorro grapes have in them the brave Spanish blood, fiery and heady, though they lack that exquisite and indescribable French nothingness, which is the soul of champagne. But those incomparable El Paso onions—they atone for all lackings. Many a one, great and sweet, did we eat raw, in our ravenous hunger for vegetables, and thought them better than whitsours.

The people were all asleep at noon when we passed through San Eleazario, and as I walked down that long street, between the low, mud-built walls, I thought again of my lonely and wondering stroll through the echoing solitudes of Pompeii. Dreary and dismal were those blank walls, without window, or shutter, or shade, or awning, while the wonderfully white and pitiless sunshine of the Rio Grande shook and shimmered unrestrained. What a weird, ghostly, shuddering march was that of ours, through that sunken and fiery street, beneath the rain-spouts on the roofs, straining far out, like imps on their bellies, to stare down upon the intruders. Not a soul was abroad in all the village, save here and there, one of those old shriveled women who never sleep, perched like a witch on the roof to watch her garden.

We could peer through the tiny wooden gratings into rooms cool, and silent, and dark. Like poor Steele in his cups, when he tore down the curtains at the Rose, these simple villagers "have no secrets here." The noise occasionally awakened a sleeper, and a pair of bewitching black eyes would peep through the grating, and then the white curtain would flash across. These absurd, mousing Americans! They have no more sense than to keep awake at noon, and go prowling about!

The very dogs, lying in the hot dust beneath the eaves, were true Mexicans, for if kicked aside, they only slunk away a little, then sneaked up and silently snapped the intruder's heels. Then a cur more cantankerous than the others would dash into the herd, and it would surge like a stupendous billow over some miserable jacal, or some ancient and evil-smelling corral of goats, and trample their venerable whiskers in the dust.

Later in the day we passed through another village, and found the streets narrow as usual, but agog now with the slow and indolent stir of Mexican life. Pretty and graceful girls—there are none other—glided along in white bodices and the inevitable scarlet sashes, holding over their heads their bright-colored rebozos. They pinch them together so archly under their chins that their round faces and black eyes look like a picture in a frame. And they are so *very* numerous in the streets just now! And they are so *very* pretty! And they look upon these shaggy, and big-bearded, and savage Texans so *very* graciously!

A wrinkled and ancient hag, with her coarse hair trailing blackly down her shoulders, squatted under a bush-canopy in the plaza, with a basket of pears.

"How much a dozen?" I asked.

"*Quatro reales, senor. Muy buenas peras.*" And she began rapidly to tumble them into my hands, as if the bargain were already clenched. But they were wretched knurly things, so I started away.

"*O, senor, tres reales!* three bit. Good peareys. Come back."

I turned and looked at them, then started again and went several steps, as if in good earnest.

"*O, senor*, you buy; two bit. Very good. Come back. Two bit, *senor*."

I took the pears for that, not because they were worth anything whatever, for I fed most of them to the next pig, but because she had deigned at last to speak English.

Weary and many were the days we journeyed up the Rio Grande. Every morning at sunrise the eastern sierra, beneath the sun, would be most intensely and brilliantly blue, and the western linten-colored. At sunset this would be reversed.

Fort Bliss stands on a little crescent shelf of shore, nearly level with the river. What with the gravel walks, smooth as if dressed with a jackplane, the rows of whitewashed trees, the long white-stuccoed barracks, the grim, old, shining cannon, and the pacing sentinels, we seemed almost at home again.

On both sides of the river the bottom narrows in to a point at the outlet of the pass, and on one point stands Franklin, on the other El Paso. We could see nothing of El Paso, though it is miles in length, except a few yellow moresque spires above the long wall of cottonwoods. In Franklin we found pretty stuccoed houses, in American style, linen coats, wrangling lawyers with their legs on the tables, sherry cobblers (without ice), streets wide and shaded by great trees, and—better than all else—a post-office with letters from home.

The sierras here round grandly in, to form the famous Pass of the North, and approach each other parallel within a mile, for a distance of about five miles. The sloping deserts of gravel on both sides of the river are compressed into an elevated plain, through which is trenched the Rio Grande. There is no sublimity of mountain grandeur at all, but the panorama is highly impressive and even imposing, by reason of its mighty vistas, its vast deserts, its blue-stretching sierras, and the cheerful greenery of the river region, like a flat-iron for shape, with its point shoved into the pass.

From the haggard, and scarred, and ghastly heights of the plain you look down on the river, and feel that there is fertility yet left in the world somewhere. Over on the Mexican side you see pale straw-colored, or milky, or rich creamy cliffs of limestone, some of them wavy-streaked with yellowish amber, like gigantic agates. The exquisitely tender green of the mountain mesquite, dotting with little clumps these mellow and milky cliffs, gives indescribably beautiful effects of color.

Thus, in more senses than one, the view I had of Texas in leaving it, as Dr. Johnson said of Scotland, was the finest I saw.

CHAPTER XIII.

AMONG THE ENAMELED HILLS.

BEFORE we entered New Mexico, we met a little shabby man, on a little shabby, mouse-colored mule. On his head he wore a Mexican sombrero, from under which peered out two small eyes, which evidently were not made for nothing. He never looked anybody in the face, but he asked a great many questions—not about cattle at all—and took a good many side squints at the herd.

A day or two after, somehow or other—nobody could tell precisely—we met him again. Soon afterward it so happened that we overtook him, and we began to feel now that we were quite well acquainted, and that he was a very valuable person to us, he gave us so much useful information. Some shook their heads, but indeed I don't see how we could have dispensed with him at all. He seemed to know the entire country round about, and told us so kindly where the best grazing grounds were to be found. He staid with us in camp one night, "seeing it happened that he was belated," and amused us to a late hour with Indian stories, which were very harrowing and blood-curdling. In fact, the hair on one man's head stood up to such a degree that it hoisted his hat off. A night or two afterward we heard an unaccountable number of Indian yells around our camp, which were exceedingly hellish and terrific; and the next day we found many moccasin tracks in the road.

After that we never saw our kind informant more; but in the due lapse of time we ate bread which was fermented with his yeast.

Meanwhile, from the elevated sandy desert near Los Cruces, we will look down upon the valley of the Rio Grande in its noblest proportions. This desert stretches back to the Organ Mountains, which, with their silver pipes of pinnacles, stand so lordly up in the blue galleries of heaven. The old, adventurous Spaniards, if they did a little too often seek to square accounts with their neglected saints by giving their names to mountains, nevertheless had an eye to the resemblances of nature, and at least never perpetrated such hideous vulgarities as Hog-eye and Shirt-tail Canyon.

Looking toward the valley, we see an immeasurable contiguity of corn, just coming into floss and tassel, or a piece of a wheat field, full of shocks, or one of those fabulous meadows of alfalfa, mown five times a year, and yielding $1,200 per acre. Here at least laziness is sense, for it saves the scattered trees, which wade up to their knees in the corn, all along the distant river. On the Mexican side of the Rio Grande a huge section is knocked clean out of the sierra, and a singular, reddish-purple plain sweeps back through the gap, till it rounds down out of sight. Over it hang some "shadow-streaks of rain."

Down in the valley, among the white encampments and the vast herds, sleepily chewing the cud, or just toppling over into the afternoon siesta, a Mexican in a red gala shirt and a straw sombrero has just thrown the lazo over a steer. His little mustang buckles down to it mightily, and tugs the sullen brute along, while the assistant runs along behind, and twists his tail, or pricks his sides with the remorseless goad.

Here come a ranchero and his spouse, on a ridiculously little nag, hurrying home from Los Cruces before the rain.

The woman has the saddle, and sits facing to the right, but the man behind has both stirrups, the reins of the bridle, and the woman. He hugs her so tightly around the waist that she turns unmistakably red in her black face. Or is it because everybody in camp laughs, and this redness is a blush? It was such a funny sight, like two well developed baboons on a galloping goat, with their feet almost dragging on the ground.

The Mexicans are exceedingly keen in a barter, and seldom failed to overreach the Texans. Whenever we were near a village, they would swarm around us, both men and women, apparently determined to get what little money there was in the train; and our men seemed to lose their senses, and were, as they said, "bound to trade something anyhow." A good American horse, a little jaded perhaps, or two or three cattle, with some contemptible boot of onions or such things, were freely given for a mustang, an animal which I detest more than a mule.

Yonder you see a crowd around a North Alabama giant, who is trying to break his new acquisition. The execrable beast, with a rag tied around his eyes, rears and plunges, then runs backward, then forward again, and "bucks." Then he stands still, and kicks up more than a score of times, while the crowd roars with laughter. Now he reaches round, in his raging hatred, and tries to masticate his rider's knees; now he lies down and rolls over; now he gets up, and runs like a thief, and stops so suddenly that the rider goes over his head, and alights upon his pate. Now he is up again, and has the beast down on the ground. He sits on his head, he tweaks his ears, he jounces himself up and down on his belly, he tickles him in certain spots reputed to possess a mysterious efficacy and connection with domableness.

Now he is up and astride of him again, and the beast behaves himself much better. He is conquered. "Experientia does it." But you may ride a mustang once a week, and you will have to conquer him over again every time.

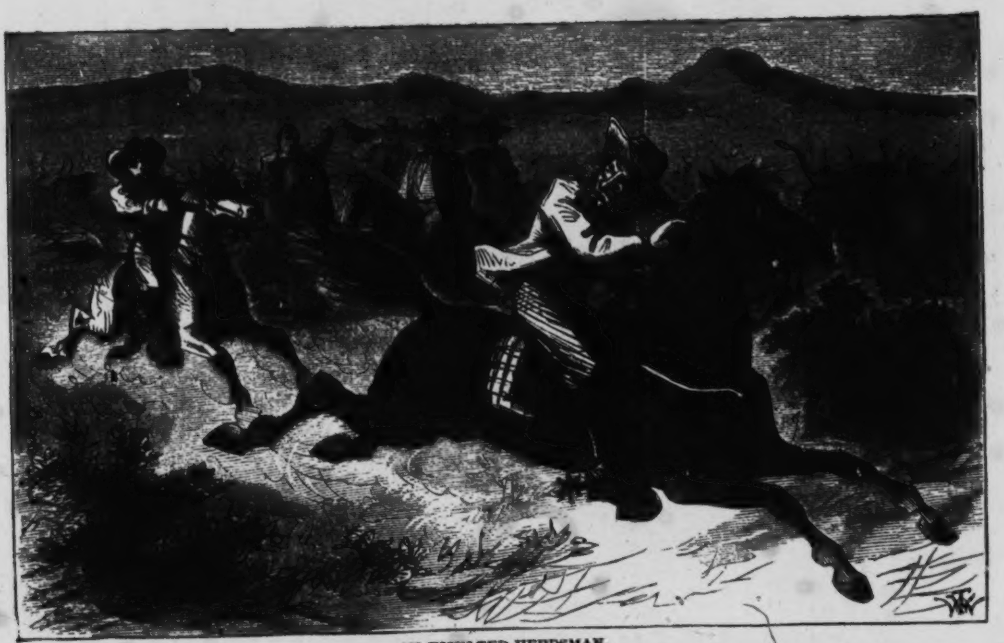
Yonder in the chaparral a paysano runs swiftly along, trailing his long tail-feathers in the dust, in pursuit of a snake. One can almost accuse Nature of injustice here, for this bird has poor, dusty-looking plumage, cannot fly, and has no song but a sort of clucking or thrumming, like the noise of a bone castanet. It is a shy bird, and seems to feel as if it were treated unfairly, for there is in its poor cluck now and then a note of touching sadness, as if, with the soul of Procne imprisoned in its body, it were bewailing its hard destiny. If we had the wonderful ring of Canace, by wearing which,

> "There is no foule that fleeth under heven,
> That she ne shalle understand his steven,"

what should we hear? Do birds ever really mourn? To our ears, accustomed to sounds that express grief, they seem to at times. To my ear, the warble of the bluebird is the voice of deep melancholy trying to be cheerful, smiling through its tears, as it were; but the cluck of the paysano seems to be the wail of utter and hopeless despair.

When we reached Fort Selby, and were about to cross the river, there appeared among us a government beef-contractor for New Mexico and Arizona, and some were so malicious as to think we then had an explanation of the terrific Indian whoops with which we had been serenaded.

There was one of the owners of the herd, who had a big, short body, and a big head. His face was like a small ham of bacon, but less expressive, rimmed with short, black whiskers. He was very conceited, and very silly, and very cowardly, and his name was Henry. The Indian stories of the cunning emissary had greatly frightened



AN INSULTED HERDSMAN.

him, and he now sold his share to the contractor at a ridiculously low figure, and they at once set about the tedious work of separating them.

The scene is a vast, sandy desert, faintly greened with grass, sweeping back to the Organ Mountains, and in the front distance Fort Selden, miles away by the river. Here and there is a dead sage-bush, sprawling flat in a gray rosette upon the ground, or a little *canutillo* bush, with leaves like jointed knitting-needles.

Every herdsman is on duty to-day, riding slowly around the monster herd. Half a dozen owners end their deliberations in the Captain's marque, mount their superb steeds, and lope leisurely away across the plain to the cattle. The little stout man, Henry, with the red face, "tosses up" with his tall partner, George, for first choice. George wins. He surveys the herd a moment.

"Cut out that black fellow with the lop-horn," he quietly orders one of the herdsmen. The man rides in and puts his well-trained horse behind the one designated. He works him slowly out to the periphery of the herd, then quickly spurs up, whereupon the horse hunts him swiftly out, following all the animal's dodges so closely that he finds himself irresistibly projected in a straight line.

"Cut out that blue one, with a cross and an under-bit in the left," cries Henry, with much importance.

Another herdsman hunts him out in the same manner. George orders out a third. Thus they alternate, the contractor keenly looking on the while, and occasionly consulting with Henry aside. So the work goes bravely on, until the herd of those parted off begins to assume considerable proportions, and the weary horses are relieved by a fresher relay. Then a dispute arises about a "maverick," that is, a stray they had picked up in Texas.

"But I say, Henry," says George, riding a few steps closer to the herd, "that animal is my private property, not subject to choice."

"But he haint got a ray-wheel on his gob."

"But he's got a swallow-fork on his flipper."

"I thought yourn had a bottle on the clod."

"No, he didn't."

Contractor, (riding up with the virtuous deprecation of a mediator, and a cunningly feigned and slightly contemptuous magnanimity,) "I'd rather give you the steer, sir, than quarrel about him this way."

George, (pretty tartly,) "Thank you, sir. I buy all my cattle."

Henry, (gesturing frantically, and spurring toward the man,) "Cut him out, will you! D'ye hear, you fool?" As the herdsman does not start, Henry rides furiously upon him, whereupon the herdsman quickly pulls out his revolver. At this, the blustering coward wheels his horse, which, with a Texan instinct, rears backward almost upon his haunches, as if knowing well what a revolver means in New Mexico. Both horses make a pirouette, flinging the sand in the air. The herdsman gives a fiendish yell. Henry spurs for dear life and bends low over the pommel of his saddle while the herdsman follows hard after, clicking his revolver. The desert rings with laughter. They dash through the smaller herd, and scatter it to the four winds. When the herdsman has chased him long enough for his amusement, he wheels and returns. The other, as soon as that wicked revolver is out of sight, also comes back, much crest-fallen. The division proceeds.

We crossed the Rio Grande at the lower end of the terrible Jornada del Muerto. The river here bowls with great violence against a low rocky bluff, then turns away in a broad and quiet stream. In this bluff there is a singular crevasse or shute, sloping to the water's edge; and in this they would put a hundred cattle at a time, then run, and swing their arms, and scare them into the water.

When we were encamped on the other side, there came another drove after us, the herdsman of which ranged themselves along the bank below the chute, with revolvers, to prevent the cattle from swimming back. They fired broadside after broadside into the water among them, and the bullets ricocheted right among our tents with a diabolical screech. I suddenly had occasion to examine a minute flower close to the ground, but our Texans stood about and never winked. At last one of them, an odd blunt genius, went to the edge of the bank, drew his revolver, and fired a ball into the water so that it howled among the offenders on the other side. With a perfectly unmoved countenance, he called to them;—

"You didn't hear nothin' over thar? Now, when you want to do yer seranadin', do it when you orter, at night."

Forgetting that the river was now between us and the fort, we slept, as usual, without guards, and somebody stole nineteen horses, untying some halters from the very wagons men were sleeping under. It was believed that the Apaches did it; but it was not Apaches who ate our roast beef, for they only carried the spider away a rod or so, and there were unmistakable indications of tobacco-chewers around it on the ground. Whatever crimes the savages may do, in their natural state they do not chew tobacco.

The mountains above the ferry are reddish with jasper conglomerate. We passed out through a mighty gorge of linten-gray. As we went farther out, the walls grew darker, and the clouds began to lower ominously. Then there burst upon us an awful tempest of wind and rain, wrapping us in Memphian and appalling blackness, so that in the very noonday we stood in darkness, and heard the mountains roar, and the rain seeth and hiss, and the waters rage in the gullies.

We passed up now into the picture-galleries of New Mexico, which I shall never forget. As they remove all things whatsoever from a room in the Vatican, and hang in it, alone in their matchless beauty, the master-pieces of Raphael and Domenichino, so Nature clears these her galleries of all wheat, and corn, and trees, to paint upon the hills her peerless frescoes. Morning and evening and at noon, with varying shades more delicate than Correggio's, she plies her "sweet and cunning hand."

The first morning after we left the river, we found ourselves in the middle of an immense grassy plain, in a circle of these enchanted hills. The reader, following my poor descriptions, will doubtless weary, but I beg him to have patience with me, while I attempt to enumerate some of these colors, for my own satisfaction, at least.

The sun is an hour high above the river hills, which show no color but an intensely brilliant azure. But on top of them floats a frill or ruffle of fog, which the lazy breeze is rolling out round, like one of those slubs of wool spun by our grandmothers, and which, at the end of the sierra, it twists off in handfuls, which seem to be no common fog, but, in this wonderful sunlight, globes of molten silver.

Farther round toward the south the hills straggle apart, and swoon away in the far dimness. Only a few tops of peaks are visible above the plain, as when, from a steady deck, one beholds the billows rolling on the uttermost rim of the Atlantic, against a beautiful sky.

Still farther round there stand twin pinnacles alone, reaching a little higher above the plain. The sun bathes them in a soft dove-color. Another summit stands quite alone, in the mellowest and most tender lilac.

Yonder is a long, grim looking fortress, with a brown ledge for its parapet wall. Its sloping scarp is covered, like the plain, with leaden grama grass, on which the rainy season has just combed up a nap of tender green.

Toward the southwest, and nearer to us, is a chain of separate hills, round as Scioto mounds, and every one absolutely faultless, smooth and clean as a shaven lawn. No hills in vulgar atmospheres shine like these, as the sun and the clouds skim over them, in their pretty races. The greenest ripen with a sudden blush of gold, like a half-turned orange on the banks of the sunny Opelousas; one that is paler green mellows in the sunlight like a jenneting, almost ripe.

Far away to the west, through a gap, a low hill seems to be vomiting up the solar spectrum. No, it is one of those colored fountains, which they know how to make so fairy-like in Berlin. But see, there go up smoke and mist, and all the heavens above and around it are muffled in thick darkness, as of showers of ashes and lava. It is Vesuvius. No, it is only the end of this morning's rainbow grown fast there, and broken off. It seems almost a demonstration of the Pythagorean theory, as expounded by Ovid, that earth melts into mist, and mist into flame.

North of the gap there is a long hill, which looks like a red-tiled roof, grown green with mold, and smirched with clumps of moss.

Quite near us is an enormous rugged hill. Up its lower slopes the dull grass of the plain creeps with imperceptible steps of shades; from the leaden-green to the gray of poplin, which a flaw ruffles with a sudden shiver of silver; then to a fine russet; an indescribably rich golden-russet; ugly linten; then a light indigo, tinged with purple. The majestic turret towers a thousand feet above the plain, in that soft rich brown I have seen in Perugino's pictures, in which, however innocent and doll-like may be his figures, our eyes are sated with a quiet richness never surpassed by the moderns.

Ah! how shall I describe the dear delight and intoxication that came over my eyes, as they gazed upon this wreath of hills, painted only with simple stones, and grass, and sunbeams? Pitiful were his soul who would think an evil thought here; pitiful as that of Bunyan's man, who kept on raking with his muck-rake when the angel offered him a shining crown.

At Cook's Canyon we had a singular illustration of Apache character. In this pass, which is a decidedly ugly one, a horde of these savages secreted themselves, a few days before we arrived, and pounced upon an emigrant train, which they thought they were strong enough to murder—for the dastardly villains will never attack, unless they are ten to one—but the Texans valorously stood their ground, and the Apaches finally ran away, howling lustily. As usual with them, they left their dead behind. The consequence was that we were perfectly safe, and all trains coming after us would be, till sometime late in that following autumn.

Can the reader imagine why? It was not so much because they had been beaten there, as it was because the superstitious Apache will not fight again in a place where one of his tribe has been killed, until the grass grows again.

It is a curious superstition. Lucan says the Druids believed that the soul of the fallen warrior straightway entered the body of one of his comrades, there to renew the fight, which would be thoroughly characteristic of the *furia Celtica*, at least; but the Apache seems to think the soul of the dead man climbs into some body that hasn't been hurt yet, and runs away as fast as Satan will let him. Or does the Apache, in his immeasurable haughtiness, believe that he, being a son of Nature, is protected or deserted, as the case may be, by some *genius loci*; and that his defeat in the place is a token of its displeasure, which he must wait for the growing grass to signify has become appeased? I don't suppose he troubles himself much with any such philosophy.

In coming up from the Rio Grande, we crossed a succession of noble tables, barred like a griddle with low parallel cordilleras. Generally the wagons rolled right through on a grassy isthmus of plain, but there are a few savage gorges, bristling with agave, and the trenchant bear-grass, and palmilla.

On one of these broad plains we passed an immense and beautiful lake of mirage, the most wonderful I ever beheld. Near us it had the grayish-brown and watery glimmer of ice, and the stout trunks of palmilla looked like soldiers, with their muskets at a shoulder, frozen to their knees in the ice-field. Far out in it were some knolls like islands, and there the tiny billows, in the purple and argent sheen of the sunlight, wimpled in lazy races along the uttermost edge of that delusive nothingness, dancing against the sky, and tumbled, wantonly dallying, on the bosom of hyacinthine, imaginary sands. O, that I had wings like yon swallow, that I might fly away to those Happy Isles, those—

"Far-off isles enchanted
Heaven has planted
With the golden fruit of Truth;"

or a ship like the Argo, that I might sail in quest of their purple shores! There might we learn of our hereafter; might hear what Minos heard when he talked with Jove, and see what Tantalus saw in the circle of the immortal gods.

On each of these plains, as we mounted slowly up, the grass grew thinner and more meager, and the last one before we reached the valley of the Mimbres has nothing but bushes. It is the cockloft, where good Mother Nature keeps her dried herbs. In the freshness of the dewy morning there came up a sweet savor from the bergamot-bush, and from some invisible source a most exquisite perfume like sassafras.

For the valley of the Mimbres let the reader conceive of a book of prairie, opened out nearly flat, with a bookmark of willows and cottonwoods reaching down to the middle. It lies under the shadow of majestic green and piney mountains, worthy of Vermont. Out of these issues the Mimbres, a stout and noisy creek, wonderfully pure, cold, and clear, and rattles down a matter of a dozen miles, and then perishes in these remorseless plains.

In the village of Rio Mimbres we went to a wretched jumping jig, which they called a fandango, wherein black-eyed maidens with scarlet sashes, and gaudy ruffians with their pistol-buts glinting in the yellow candle-light, skipped about in a low room. The guitar seemed to have the quinsy. The women sat around the room on benches, and if you wanted a partner you only had to step out on the floor and wink at one of them. There were none but Mexican women present, but there were only two or three of the vilest sort of Mexican men about, and even these appeared to regard the matter with contempt, and took no part in the dancing.

Ah! Brother Jonathan and Mr. John Bull, what becomes of your proud theory of the "extirpating Saxon" in these frontier villages? Whose language do these little mongrel jackanapes, these young Mexican Partheniæ, speak—yours, or that of the renowned Sancho Panza? Perhaps you don't understand bad Spanish. Do these poor Mexican girls learn English? or do their paramours rather learn Spanish? It is wonderful how the language of those grand old hidalgos, even when spoken by these mongrels, holds its own against the sharp and thrifty incursions of Americans. Even so is it in Tyrol, where the indolent and sunny children of Italy, though almost incomparably inferior in moral stamina and intellectual vigor to the Germans, see their language steadily gaining. My brave and "enterprising" countrymen, know you not that these wretched villagers, living in the Apache's land, are indebted for their very existence to the presence of less than a dozen of you? and yet you learn their language, and not they yours!

We journeyed a great many miles up a sloping plain, to Cow Spring, and a long way beyond that we entered a mighty valley, or rather a slightly depressed plain, running east and west. The watershed between the Gulf and the Pacific does not consist of a single ridge, but is nearly fifty miles broad. On both sides of the watershed the mountain ranges run parallel north and south, but the two which inclose this valley are hauled round at right angles with the others. Hence there is an area fifty miles long and thirty wide, which has no drainage into either ocean. Along the middle of this valley the water settles in winter half an inch deep on hundreds of thousands of acres, which are destitute of all vegetation whatsoever; but when we passed, these vast spaces, called playas, were solid and yellow as beaten gold, except here and there, where the nitrous or saline efflorescence had electroplated them with silver.

A strange and wonderful sight it was, here on the very top of the continent, to stand at a distance and watch our long caravan roll on across this enchanted desert, level as the sea, which at high noon-day was too glaringly bright to gaze upon.

My mess-mates occasionally made themselves merry at my expense, on account of Black Bell, the wench I have spoken of before, so called to distinguish her from another Bell, the youthful belle of the train. I would saunter on a considerable distance ahead of the wagons, profoundly meditating on some trifles, *totus in illis*, or botanizing, and she would tag along after me, also botanizing, to wit; extracting the thorns from her flesh. Poor thing! in this journey she must have pulled out about thirteen hundred prickles from her feet, for they were so large that they hit all the chaparral within a limited number of rods.

In all the Mexican villages we passed through I read but two words—yesterday, tomorrow. "Yesterday we did as our forefathers used to do; to-morrow we will do likewise. Give me another cigarrito."

San Eleazario, Socorro, Ysleta, Las Cruces, Dona Ana, Rio Mimbres—beautiful and sonorous names are they all, but how much abject squalor and wretchedness they cover! One vulgar Texan Jonesville is worth them all.

It is amusing to observe the Mexican alongside the lordly citizen of Texas. He is generally about four inches shorter. He wears shoes, like a slave, and not boots to tuck his trowsers into. He does not wear a revolver openly, in sight of all men, but a sneaking dagger, concealed. Approach and ask him questions. He does not answer roundly, but with a whipped softness of speech, screwing his face to yours like a Neapolitan commissionaire. He comes into camp and speaks Spanish a little, but keeps his English ear open. He grins, and counts your cattle. Next morning your favorite yoke of oxen is gone, and you race up and down in the chaparral all the forenoon, distracted, but about noon—remarkable coincidence!—you meet that same Mexican. You tell him your troubles. You wipe your reeking forehead. You excite his compassion. For about five dollars he will agree to search; "as he knows the country better than you do, perhaps he might succeed." In an hour he brings them. It is wonderful!

All day long he sits cross-legged under a cottonwood, with two melons and seven very pale hen's-eggs. When you look that way, he grins; when you botanize, he brushes away the mosquitoes.

Last night your best horse was stolen by Mexicans. O, that is nothing. "Antonio, come here. I have lost my horse. He was bright bay, had a left fore-foot white, and roached mane." You show him a new gold eagle; he nods, he understands. To-morrow night he sleeps in the same blanket with the thief, rises at midnight, sticks his dagger into his heart, and brings your horse.

Owing partly to the scampish doings of many emigrants in their gardens, partly to their repugnance to the *caras blancas*, they seldom liked to have us encamp near their houses, though they were glad to have us remain at a convenient distance for traffic. Hence they invariably lied to us, when they told us the distance to the next place, and to make their lies more gratuitous always added, when they mentioned the number of miles, *no mas* (no more).

"Why do you Mexicans always lie?" I asked a clownish fellow with whom I was talking.

"O, no senor," said he, looking at me with a dazed expression, as if he were not certain he had understood, "we always tell the truth."

Now, I admire that fellow. He was consistent. The Cretan poet said that all Cretans were liars, whereby he told the truth for once, and disgraced his island; but this poor fellow was consistent with himself and all his countrymen, for he lied to the last.

I hope it may not seem impertinent in a pedestrian to speak his little piece, in the very old and stale debate on Mexican annexation.

Firstly, I think we had better not go down into that country, lest we might be assassinated. The Mexicans are not to be blamed for this proverbial tendency of theirs, because it comes from the atmosphere, as may be abundantly proven by the fact that an American, residing below the northern cactus line, in the second generation issues a pronunciamiento quarterly, and in the third generation has an irresistible inclination to dirk an alcalde. But the effects of this tendency are very injurious, nevertheless, however innocent may be its origin; and the fewer victims we expose to its action, the more humanity will be benefited.

In one of Bismarck's private letters he uses this expression; "I am grateful to God for every tie that binds me closer to myself." Whatever we may think of that sentiment for an individual, for a nation, and above all for a republic so vast and embracing so many races as does ours, it is supreme wisdom. It is the secret of strength. Can any man in the possession of a modicum of sense believe that the addition of Mexico will add anything to our strength, to our riches, or to any desirable element whatever? What is Mexico? It is the religion and laws of Spain, which in the eye of civilization and for the great uses of God are the most worthless of Christian Europe; and the nature and vices of the Aztecs, which were the most contemptible of heathen America. As a clever writer says, it is "a slavery which is of the Church, and a liberty which is of the Devil." The sole redeeming thing in this medley of all that was worst in two continents was the old Spanish valor. But what was that worth when it had been corrupted through a few generations with Aztec blood? When Mexico revolted at last, and became independent, all the Spaniards within her borders made haste to declare themselves the sons of Montezuma. In that sublime hour when the Declaration was proclaimed by the Fathers, what Englishman bethought himself to claim the lineage and heirship of Powhatan?

Mexico has the fatal gift of beauty. It is no superstition to recognize and start back before the strange and dark fatality which invests that weirdly beautiful but unhappy country. There is not on all the earth another land which has become the grave of so many empires of conquest and ambition. Mexico is the ancient Bluebeard of nations, in whose gorgeous palaces have ignominiously perished all brides who have wedded themselves to its inexorable genius of annihilation.

Second, as to the Mexicans themselves. In the first place, of all things which are certain in American affairs, the most certain is that the Mexicans do not desire us as masters. The only thing which could possibly reconcile them to our rule would be the retention of Mexican officials throughout, in which case they would be no better governed than before. But this is utterly improbable. Nothing would do in Mexico but a standing army, which would create a government infinitely worse than the natural and inherent anarchy of the country. And then—to say nothing of the consistency of one republic dominating *vi et armis* over another—of all forms of human government, a republic is the most unsuitable for managing an army.

If, by anything I have seen of the Mexicans, I have earned the right to say one earnest word of advice to my countrymen, I would say: Leave Mexico, wholly and in all its parts, to its own people. It will be a most melancholy and disgusting spectacle to the patriot—if ever that day should come—to see our cherished and historic flag polluted, by being dragged through the infamous, bloody, and accursed politics of Mexico.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNDER GOLDEN AND ROSY SKIES.

ONE of the most pitiable things in human nature is the selfishness which it develops under the strain of miseries and lack of water. As illustrating this point, a little condensed history of our train will be in order, though petty in itself.

First, a description of the Captain of our train. He was a little stout man, with his trousers always in his boots, and a feeble smile eternally on his face. His voice was soft and pleasant in conversation, and his quiet way of moving about and giving his orders in small affairs, but for that evergreen smile, would have impressed one with the idea of latent power. He had a way of holding his hands behind him when he talked, and he would continually rock forward on his toes, then come down heavily on his heels, and ever grin, grin, grin, and talk in that feeble voice, which seemed half-apologetic for his existence. At first he was immensely popular in camp, partly because of his renown as a terrible and dreaded partisan in the war of rebellion, partly because of his way of riding at times with a thunderous rush, leaping in his stirrups, swinging his hat and whooping, as in the old, glorious days when he swooped down upon the pale and terror-stricken Yankees like the Blast of the Desert.

I sometimes thought, remembering the vindictiveness he was said to have shown towards his enemies, and the frenzied energy with which he laid about him in battle, that he had become partly demented by excitement. More than that he had a wife of a surly and taciturn strength of character, by whom he was grieviously hen-pecked. He began to become unpopular through several shabby actions he did against his men, and the dislike of a few became the secret contempt of all, when it was found that, if at any time matters came to a desperate pinch, and we needed above all things else a sharp and quick authority, he degenerated into a conspicuous booby. On such occasions he gave very few orders, and those were distinguished for their asinine absurdity.

One day it happened, that we traveled long after nightfall in quest of water, and encamped at last without any. Orders were issued for everybody to start "at crack of day; but our cook, having had sense enough to bring along a supply of water, rose very early, and quietly set to work to get breakfast. In due time the Captain rose and went about camp, as usual, roaring out, "Rouse up, boys, rouse up, rouse up!" Then he came and squatted down by our fire, warmed and rubbed his hands, washing them in "imperceptible water," grinned, talked, and looked occasionally with great confidence and comfort at our coffee-pot. But matters had already come to such a pass that Tom did not invite him to take a cup, as he had often done.

Before we were through breakfast, all the Captain's family were up, and grouped about, gazing with envious eyes toward our cheery fire, while the wind provokingly wafted the savory aroma of our coffee-pot straight towards them. From the number of cuffs she bestowed on little Sterling, it was evident the Mistress Captain was deeply chagrined, and would punish us at the first opportunity for having been so presumptuous as to have water when they had none.

She had not long to wait. Again it happened that we were obliged to make a dry camp after nightfall. Strict orders were promulgated that every wagon should be on the road at daybreak. San Antonio had water, as usual, but it was only five miles to the well, so he prepared to obey with the others. But next morning ever watchful Dave, with his Indian ear, noticed an unusual stir around the marquee at head-quarters, and prowling about in the darkness, he discovered the Captain's kitchen in full blast, both the Mistress Captain, and Black Bell bestirring themselves mightily—for the old lady, when she chose to be, was a notable housewife. Even the charming Bell was up, and had her toilet made—a thing never previously known to occur before breakfast. It was manifestly a family plot.

At once our cook dropped every thing else, and plunged into the dough. We all helped him, one starting the fire, another slicing the beef, another grinding the coffee; and, thanks to the Spartan simplicity of our kitchen, we sat down around some very good steaks and biscuits only a minute or two after the Captain's family.

Such were some of the petty and contemptible jealousies of emigrant life. Of the more disgraceful outbreaks, the downright and profane janglings, I shall say nothing.

We entered Arizona through the gateway of Doubtful Canyon, the gatepost of which is Steen's Peak. In the center of the Canyon there is a vast circular chamber, gloomily enclosed with sloping walls of galena. Clumps of bear-grass dot the sombre hillsides with silver, like the sunbursts on fine old Mexican dollars. Here and there a wild century-plant sends its branching scape towering thirty feet in the air, like a great candelabrum—some of its upright pods, like gas-burners, still flickering (in August) with hazel-yellow flames of flowers. On the hillsides are bunches of tasajo, like Pope Urban's budding wand, and small mountain cedars, some of which are dead, and spread their arms abroad with a strange spectral whiteness, looking like those silvery *arbores Dianœ* of the chemical lecture-room.

Sweeping halfway round this wall, on its summit, is a majestic balustrade of pale porphyry, sometimes in blocks as vast as a cathedral. At the ends of it there stand up two isolated columns, like mighty beacons; one barely spalted off the wall of balustrade, the other leaning threateningly over, with its huge head beetling a thousand feet above the road. The upright one I determined to climb, in hope of seeing a mountain sheep, which is seen so rarely that it is the subject of almost as much fable as was the ancient hippogriff.

Hundreds of feet I wriggled and twisted myself up, among all manner of scratching things, till I reached the top of a jutting spur, where I had the pleasure of seeing a black-tailed deer which, probably had never before seen a human being. It gazed at me with unmixed wonder and without fear, till I approached within a rod. Then it slowly walked away with a dainty and scornful strut, with its neck very stiff and straight up, and nodding a little at each step, as if to say, "What a contemptible animal that is! It has no horns."

Then I commenced scaling the main shaft of rock, now clinging in treacherous niches, and now wedging myself up in a rift like a chimney-sweep. Near the summit, sure enough, there was the nest of a mountain sheep, cosily rounded in a niche in the perpendicular wall, and there were evidences that the animal had left it only that morning. But how on earth did he mount and descend? There were precipitous and solid steeps of rock, six feet high. He could pitch down headforemost, and strike on his hard little pate, as is the popular fable, but how could he ascend?

When he rounds up his little spine in the morning, with a long stretch and shiver of matutinal satisfaction, and steps upon the edge of his threshold, with his first doorstep hundreds of feet straight below him—so far, far below him that the sharp call of the quail is barely audible—and looks out over the infinite green plains of Arizona, what a regent of pinnacles is he! Egad! it were worth a thousand nights in a bed to sleep once where he sleeps, and see in the morning what he sees. To sleep within ten feet of the top of the Arizona!

Then I crawled up to the summit, but it was so very narrow, and there was such wind splitting upon it, that I could only lie across the top on my chest. What I saw in that giddy moment is known to the gods. I only remember a formless world, spinning around beneath me on an upright axle, of which I was momentarily the linchpin.

When I was descending, one of the herdsmen, unaware of my absence from the train, and looking out keenly for Apaches, drew up his Spencer rifle and fired. The bullet came up where I was with a long heart-rending squeal, and went spat against the wall a few feet from my head, while the great cleft bellowed as with an infant clap of thunder.

We marched on two days across the San Simon plain, and then entered the Apache Pass. This is the most awful and stupendous piece of natural savagery on the whole route, sombre with its dark walls of granite, and thrusting the uppermost, black-looking bushes into the very faces of the clouds. But it is more sadly and more frightfully memorable for the butcheries that have been perpetrated in its hellish caverns by the Apaches. There are many hills in it, and the ponderous train dragged on like a wounded snake, so that the blackness of night gathered down thick upon us while we were yet in the very middle of this "horror of great darkness" and of massacre.

Then occurred the most disgraceful exhibitions of cowardice, treachery, selfishness, and imbecility which happened in the whole journey. The last hill was the mightiest of all, and on it the foremost teams balked. Then the vast herd, collecting in the rear, surged down in the darkness upon the train in the bottom of the gorge, plunging and crushing their weakest to death against the ledges, while the screams of frightened women, the yells of maddened teamsters, and a thousand jangling clamors came up from the gorge against the great sombre cliffs, and were hurled back into the seething abyss. Where was the Captain? Ah! if the Apaches' savage eyes glared down upon us in that hour from some lofty eyrie, what a howling hell of the fiercest human passions they beheld! If they had known their hour!

Wearily, wearily the jaded teams, being doubled, dragged the wagons up the hill, amid such a rain of yells and teamsters' oaths as made the place a hell indeed. As soon as a majority of them were on the summit, they hurried on with the herdsmen out of the pass, leaving the weaker portion in deadly peril.

Neither was the comic element lacking. A German butcher and a negro were left alone with a wagon, while the driver went back with the most of the team to assist his neighbor. Though greatly concerned for their personal safety, they would not quit the wagon, for it contained most of their earthly substance. At last the fat butcher had a happy thought.

"Cudjoe," said he, "I ties a rope on de nigh ox's horns, and you on toder, and we trive 'em aheat."

"But dis hyur ox kick, boss."

"Kick pe tam! Do you want to lose de hair off your heat? You kick him den," replied the other, striking the air before his face, as if he were fighting a bumble-bee.

He proceeded to tie a rope on his ox, and the negro, in much trepidation and alarm, attempted to do the same. He approached very cautiously, rolling his eyes in the direction of the brute's heels, and leaning far forward with his hands stretched out toward his head. The wild ox turned his head around, and regarded these proceedings with unfeigned concern, then snorted and lashed out with his hind-leg furiously, whereupon, the negro jumped like a kangaroo.

"Whoa!"

His teeth were chattering so he could scarcely articulate the word. Then the fat butcher tried, but succeeded no better. The oxen were becoming alarmed by such unusual doings, and when the German gave the word to start, they moved off with alacrity. The negro walked on the off side, with a club in his hands, but, in watching the team, he failed to discover a stone there was in the road, over which he stumbled and fell sprawling. Thereupon the oxen broke into a gallop, and the last I saw of them, they were running down the hill at a great rate, with the little fat butcher dangling at the end of the rope.

Looking down from the Chiricahua Mountains, one receives an overpowering impression of the immensity and the richness of Arizona. O, the glory and the beauty of that fresh, bright world of grass, as I looked down upon it on that cloudless morning! So spotless as was the concave of blue above, so spotless was the concave of tender green beneath, between those two sierras.

The next plain is equally as vast, being more than two days' journeys in width; but an immense hollow, hundreds of feet in depth and many miles in width, has been eaten out along the middle of it by the San Pedro. The broad lands along this stream are exceedingly fertile, yielding noble crops of cereals and vegetables, and will be, in the future, the seat of a great population. The formation of these bottom lands is singular. They are richly clothed all over with grama grass; and on both sides of the river they project far up into the sandy plain in a series of scallops, constantly eating their way farther into it, by caving down the banks.

There was a little colony a few miles below the crossing, and I went down to it to see one Seminole Myers. He was a bachelor, living in an adobe hut, in which there was a frying-pan, a row of Apache scalps along the wall, a polished rifle, a couple of stools, and a goods-box, metamorphosed into a table. He had just brought in an immense, cool, blood-hearted melon, into which he plunged his dagger—he also had two revolvers in his belt—while it cracked ahead of the blade, with a crisp and rimy sound, as he cleft it into halves. He was a gigantic fellow, dressed entirely in buckskin; had a pair of little eyes, as keen as a hawk's, long black hair very much toused, and an immense mass of black whiskers and moustache, which reminded me of the chaparral in Apache Pass.

He invited me to sit down, and we munched melon a while, and talked of various matters. Then I broached Indian affairs.

"How is the Indian business managed in Arizona?" I asked.

"It's managed mighty ornary, stranger. Fact, tain't managed no way at all. It's jest big dog eat little dog, and save up the fur."

"But which is the big dog?"

"Well," said he, cutting off another slice, "don't be bashful, stranger. You're no friend of mine ef you don't eat that half. Well, it jest depends. Now, I don't want to do no braggin' myself, but it kinder strikes me when the blood-colored devils gits after me, the fur gits saved the way it orter be"—jerking his dagger over his shoulder at the scalps on the wall. "But the fellers ranchin' over on the Hassayamp', an' roun' Wickenburg, an' thar', why, the redskins mostly lifts their har."

"What ails the Government management in these parts, that it don't accomplish more?"

"Well now, stranger, when anybody's goin' fur to do anything, I like to see 'em do it. Now, the officers hyur, they was a foolin' roun' a long time with ole Cochise thar, a wheedlin' of him an' a honeyfuglin' of him, tryin' to make treaties or some sich, an' promised him he'd be perfectly safe, an' last they got him to come in, an' go into a tent. But their eyes was into their pockets, like them dandy officers allers has 'em, an'they never nabbed him at last. The minit ole Cochise see thar was a bug in the puddin', he out with his knife, ripped a hole in the tent, an' jumped out. I couldn't sleep fur two nights, a thinkin' of that 'ar circumstance. Lettin' him git away that way!" With that he drove his dagger half its length into the table, as if it were the escaping chief.

"You seem to think there is no other way to get on with the Indians but to use force."

"If you're goin' to kill 'em with kindness, you mout as well try to choke a oystrich to death by stuffin' melted butter down its throat with a peggin' awl. It's plumb ridic'lous, the way they do out hyur. Marchin' eighteen miles a day, with lobsters, and gingerbread doins, an' applesass fur to eat onto it, in their wagons, to ketch 'Paches as rides eighty miles a day, and thinks nuffin' of it! An' these hyur little caliker popinjays from New York—a marchin' rigged up in paper collars, and blackin' onto their shoes—this hyur kind that's got the rooster onto the kiver—to ketch them bloody devils! Thar aint no use doin' nuthin' 'less you take along men as kin live on dry beef an' a little sack of *pinole*, an' every man take his Injun, and ride till he fetches him, or else rides his own hoase's tail off of him. All these hyur foolins an' straps the cavalry has is no 'count an' wuss nor nuthin'. You caan't ketch no 'Pache with a hoss that's got a bit onto both ends of him."

After some further conversation I departed, but he would by no means let me go till he laid a ponderous melon on my shoulder.

When we left the vast plain of the San Pedro, we passed through a gap so broad that an army might march through it abreast, and entered upon the great Tucson desert. This desert is some thirty miles wide, and runs up more than a hundred miles northwestward, between two parallel sierras, to the Gila. Three thousand square miles of detestable chapparal desert—that is the country which the metropolis, Tucson, has for its immediate vicinage. The little Cienaga runs diagonally across the eastern corner of it, and gradually burrows deeper and deeper below the level of the ground, till it sinks and disappears.

Farther down the creek brawls through a narrow sluice like a railroad cut, with steep walls which look like copperas; and here the road winds along amid jungles of mighty sunflowers, beneath aspens and cottonwoods which stretch across from wall to wall. What is this written on this board? An Apache massacre? Thirty-nine negro soldiers horribly butchered in one hour by the bloody barbarians! Who can help looking a little nervously about him, and peering sharply into the sunflowers? Ah! how stupid and cruel a thing it was to send those "blameless Ethiopians," those simple, music-loving, rollicking, loamy-headed sons of Ham out here, to hunt on foot the wily and treacherous Apache, who, mounted on his fleet mustang, defies pursuit like the will-o-the-wisp, and in five minutes so secretes himself in the grass that none but another Apache can unearth him.

Between this defile and yon mountains there stretches a broad plain, as of copperas or verdigris, as if a mighty, green sea had been frozen stiff, when it was beating and chopping its waves up small. Nothing lives out there but the solemn pitahaya, the lonely Sentinel of the desert, sucking the pitiless rocks with its roots, and nourishing its great sappy core of coolness in this torrid blaze, without a sprig, without a leaf, without a flower. How the sun fiercely shakes those naked mountains in his hands! They have bowels of cool silver, but their brows are hot and haggard. Their foreheads are freckled with oxides. They have that singular, silver-leaden, drossy appearance one sees often in the argentiferous galena of New Mexico and Arizona.

In traversing the hideous chaparral, just before we reached Tucson, it occurred to me to compare the train with what it was when we set out, so great and so stout-hearted, from the Texan prairies.

Nearly all the oxen with which we started dead, and their places partly filled by the unhappy cows; more than half of the horses dead or stolen; many a man down on shank's mare, with his big toes looking out of his shoes to see how much farther it was—I was having my gay revenges now; the wagons all streaked with grease; the women "looking like frights," as they said, often walking to rest the poor cows a little, with their back hair down, and gowns as limp as the ghost of Mrs. Gamp in the second-hand clothing stores; the bacon all gone from the wagon-tails, and nothing but "petered" beef, fried in flour and water.

But the most pitiable spectacle of all was the daily diminishing herd. One of the owners had been so unwise as to start with a large number of young cattle, and all of these that were yet alive were now massed in the rear of the herd, wabbling slowly along, often compelling the herdsmen to dismount to keep them moving.

Such was the ragged, scarecrow and shirtless caravan that made a desperate and famishing stampede through the chaparral upon the ragged, scarecrow and shirtless city of Tucson.

Arriving in advance of the train, I procured some water from a Mexican woman, and then went out to our camping-ground, about a mile south of Tucson, to witness at leisure the magnificent entry of the Legion of the Flying Shirt.

From the top of Pitahaya Hill I beheld it to my satisfaction. Right at the foot of the hill the little Santa Cruz, which one can leap across, runs along, its beautiful waters purling, and bubbling, and gurgling amid the grass. Into this surged, and scrambled, and crowded, and pushed, and tumbled the thirsty multitude, men, mules, cattle, women, horses, drinking till they sensibly lowered the water supply of Tucson.

The Santa Cruz draws a streak of bright green, half-a-mile wide, diagonally across the desert parallelogram I have mentioned; and, half on the green, half on the desert, is Tucson, without a tree in its streets, a wretched huddle of mud-houses, looking like children's works, all flattened atop as with a board. Away to the north, directly beyond the city, the Santa Catharina Mountains are scarped into forms which shame the miserable mud-builders. There is a majestic reach of a city wall, with its nodes of battlemented turrets; a noble cathedral, roofed with red tiles, with one of its towers half complete, like the Frauenkirche of Munich; and farther along, a cluster of white bowlders high on the mountains, looking so much like roofs and spires that the children of the train were readily induced to believe it was Tucson, long before we were in sight of that metropolis.

I lingered on this little hill, and beheld the most imposing and gorgeous sunset of my recollection, one of those poems of earth which readers will not suffer themselves to be troubled with, more eloquent of God than all preachments of puny men, and which always fill me with an inexpressibly sweet and pensive melancholy, till the tears come into my eyes and fall. As the sun was setting, the moon came up in the opposite quarter, and then the whole heavens were barred with brilliant streaks of alternate indigo and crimson, which spanned magnificently across, in undiminished splendor, from the eastern to the western horizon. Sitting there on the summit of that pretty, taper cone till the darkness began to fall, I seemed to see, in the dwarfed pitahayas, a thousand soldiers straggling up to storm its heights.

While we were encamped near this delectable city of Tucson, one John Hagerman died of a fever, and was buried. It was said he was the second American who had ever died in that city with his trousers off. Mr. W. E. Dennison, who was killed by the Apaches, was nearly the last man left of a colony of one hundred and thirty-five pioneers who settled at Tucson in 1857. Almost all the others had fallen, sooner or later, at the hand of the relentless Apache.

A few miles south of Tucson the cathedral of San Xavier del Bac looms so strangely great and lonesome in the midst of this barbarous wilderness. All travelers whose accounts I have read mention it only in terms of praise, apparently because it seemed the proper thing to do, since it really is a wonderful edifice in a desert. But intrinsically—after all allowance is made for its unfinished tower—it is nothing but a great, heavy, sleepy, Spanish Dumb Ox.

On the other hand, there is nothing more touching in history than the constancy with which those poor Papagos —deserted by the fathers, swept by the nomadic Apaches with a hellish and relentless persecution, preyed upon by the sneaking and sponging Mexicans—have defended its venerated walls, dwelling harmlessly beside its base, and looking up to it as the oracle and vestibule of Heaven. What a lesson of religion, of simple and childlike faith, and of devotion might this tribe read the proud paleface!

Tucson is the Chaparral City of the Union. The paysano's humdrum cluck, like the chuckle of water from a bung-hole, is heard almost in its suburbs; the jackass rabbit, which here is white, throws up its heels at night, before the doors of merchandise; and the legislative and judicial linen is hung to dry on the chaparral in the back-yard.

I have described enough Mexican towns, with their low walls of houses which you might smite with a maul anywhere without breaking a window; their sunken streets, full of floury dust which is industriously comminuted by passengers, loaded asses, and skulking sneaks of dogs, all mingling together; and their goat-hurdles in the public squares. Toward the west, where the city slopes easily down to the green creek-bottom—though they cannot spare much of this for municipal uses, and have economically used the chaparral for that purpose—there are little flourishing corn-fields, and gardens, and pleasant crofts, all separated by willow hedges. Here under these old cottonwoods, some swarthy women are on their knees, bareheaded in the fierce heat, with their long raven hair trailing down their necks, washing their clothes on the knarred roots, or pestling them with clubs in the pools, or churning them up and down therein.

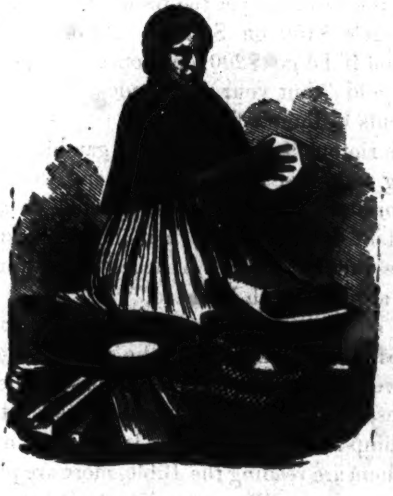
Let us push aside the scarlet door-curtain which flaunts upon the street, and enter the low, cool room, where they are playing three-card monte. This man in the hickory shirt, with the collar opened like barn-doors, top-boots, fustian trousers, and wide California hat, sweats great drops, but says no word, as he sees his last quill of dust go over to his adversary. To-morrow he will return to the mines in Apache Pass, without a dollar. The other, cool and exquisite in Spanish linen and cuffs, a gaudy and sumptuous knave, will go next month to the Legislature.

Your true American miner has no opinion which is not worth hard money, and would feel himself grievously insulted by one who should say, "A penny for your thoughts." He will weigh you out in a moment the equivalent of his convictions in good clean dust. The terse Hudibrastic utterance, "Fools for arguments use wagers," is altogether too harsh and unjust toward the average miner of America. A fool will argue till the morning stars grow dim, that Jones will be elected president; but the gruff gold digger, despising the twaddle, yet too proud to yield his opinion, says, "Here's $100 on Smith." At once the babbler is stilled, even if he go $200 on Jones. "Speech is silver, silence is gold;" but your miner adds, "Argument won't go two cents to the panful."

All this riotous living, this fierce gambling, buffoonery, staggering and beastly drunkenness, and this unmitigated farce of military protection, are enacted in a city, three miles distant from which a man hangs head downward from a mesquite, where the Apaches flayed him yesterday, and built a fire beneath his head.

In the streets, soldiers wander vacantly up and down, with holes in their elbows and the seats of their breeches, but not worn by riding after Apaches. They throng in the saloons, and drink down warm cocktails; two of them steady a limp-kneed one home. In the long mud-barracks some of them are reading the Bible, more are playing cards, betting, swearing, yelling according to the most approved precedents of alectoromachy. In the restaurant you can get bread and molasses, but the flies devour it before you can. Gilded officers in the billiard rooms punch the balls from morning to night, and every day a man is murdered by the Apaches, and his blood dries up in the desert.

But these funny, old, round-faced, ape-whiskered Mexicans, living their ninety years and nine on pancakes, beans, and red pepper! It takes three of them to drive a wooden-wheeled cart. One walks before the oxen, with his goad straight behind him, to poke them in the hips; another, with his goad ready to punch them on the left; another, to punch them on the right. But the Texan, with his rod-long whip, and his grand and lazy stride, will guide his six, eight, ten yoke majestically through the city, and seem to be unconscious of its very existence.



CHAPTER XV.

CAPTURED.

IF there be any human discomfort which is not comprehended in being hauled across the continent by grass-fed oxen in fly-time, I have not rightly studied the wagons and their inmates. In a great company of emigrants, gathered from the fiercely independent and willful South, there are at best many discordant elements; to which add the janglings of teamsters and herdsmen, the breakdowns, the mirings in Serbonian bogs, the sneaking rains, the starts and stops, the ox over the chain and the driver tugging at his tail to haul him back, the grease spilled over your coat, the tent leaking into your ear, the dog taking unwarrantable liberties with the frying-pan.

Then, of all trains on the road, ours was notoriously the slowest, for reasons previously indicated in part. Before we had traveled a hundred miles, I was satisfied that the principal reason why Texans emigrate is to exercise themselves in the following problem: Given grass, wood and water, to find the least amount of traveling that can be done.

"Come to me, my son, and let me teach you Texan arithmetic. No wood is to no water as no grass is to—what?"

"No traveling, sir."

"Wrong. Traveling day and night. Try again. No grass multiplied by no water equals what?"

"Dont know, sir."

„Ah! stupid boy! No oxen, of course"

Still I staid with the train, because I was afraid of the Indians. But, as day after day went on, and we saw never a redskin, a kind of shame for my cowardice was added to my share of the universal disgust; and in Tucson I determined to venture on alone.

Before I left, the Nothing-at-Steak killed the fatted heifer, and we eat together a half-way supper. Behold us now squatted around, Papago-like, clasping our knees in our arms on the green sward, while Pitahaya Hill flings over us eastward its long mantle of lilac and orange shadows. San Antonio prepares the repast. He makes pancakes. Does he turn them over with a knife? No; he scorns an operation so devoid of genius, and, with a dextrous jerk of the frying-pan, he causes them to ride aloft, turn a neat somersault, and descend upon their backs.

We have no "rich puddings and big, and a barbecued pig;" but we have such a roast—on the plains a man will eat roast beef any time in the day he can get it, and ask no questions for conscience's sake about etiquette—such a roast as can be fattened by grama grass alone, tender, well-browned, sweet, and juicy with yellow gravy. The man is my friend who can make such gravy.

And so, with a mellow pair of bottles of Cocomango's mellowest, pipes and cigars, and certain curious Papago hops, we made a night of it. I had resolved to start at night, to pass certain perilous points in the darkness, and the time was now at hand. Earnestly and unanimously they warned me, for the last time, not to make the attempt. To all their warnings I replied, substantially, as follows:—

"You remember that when we left Waxahatchie, we were to be shot at on the Brazos; were certainly to be attacked on the Concho; most of us killed and scalped at Castle Gap; the reminder burnt alive in Olympia Canyon; in Apache Pass all dug up, killed over again and our skins taken for drums. But what have we seen? Six of us have seen moccasin-tracks; one of us saw a palma that he thought was a Camanche; one found a moccasin; one dreamed, after eating too much steak, that an Apache sat on his stomach. One night, when I laid my head on an ant-hill in the darkness, I dreamed, first, that I had the seven-year itch, next, that I was scalped. Nay more, my brave comrades, at Fort Selden we saw a horse that the Apaches had shot at—and missed.

"No, my valiant companions, mighty to eat beef, you and I respect each other too much to be mouthing these old wives' fables, and trying to scare each other. I know each of you would stand by me, at the pinch, till he lost the number of his mess. You certainly know that I also would stand by you—if there were a bush near enough—taking notes as hard as ever I could. Then let us have done with this cowardly flummery.

"And now I give you my parting benediction: May the beloved partners of your bosoms never wear false hair, may your little boys never buy any whistles, and may no cactus grow upon your graves. If, as you journey on, you find a little heap of bones beside the road, for the remembrance of the good days we have seen together I pray you sprinkle over them a handful of dust; and on that book of memory wherein your comrade's faults are written, let a little dust gather too."

Then we solemnly shook hands around our camp fire, and there was more than one voice so husky it could scarcely articulate "good-bye." As I walked rapidly away into the midnight darkness, there was probably not a man in camp who did not pity me for my folly, and believe that I never would see California alive, or even the banks of the Gila.

From Tucson the Santa Cruz runs nearly west, and goes bobbing in and out, playing bo-peep with the outer world, until it takes a final dive. It is supposed to run under the desert about ninety miles, and bubble up into the Gila at Maricopa Wells. From out its almost impenetrable chaparral many a fatal arrow has sped on its winged flight toward some unfortunate, and I ran the gauntlet with bated breath.

In the morning I found myself up again on the level of the great parallelogram, traversing a gigantic forest of pitahayas, an evergreen colonade, some of them with their two arms opposite, rounding gracefully outward then upward, looking like branched candlesticks. Wherever the desert is barrenest, and on the mountains, they grow. They sentinel their very summits, standing out darkly distinct against the mighty moon which looks like a fire built by these watchmen, as they were kindled by the Greeks to telegraph home the news of the fall of Troy. Ah! that we might make ourselves like this pitahaya! In the barrenest wastes of life, if we would only go down to the springs of things, we might always have in us the plenteous sap of consolation.

The parallel Santa Rita and Santa Catharina Mountains, which border this desert, are insignificant in height; but they are of a granitic porphyry which, seen in this magic atmosphere, and mellowed by soft white-lilac haze, is wonderfully beautiful.

But I must carry on my narrative to the adventure which overtook me, and promised to be rather serious. When I left the train, I brought along one of my blankets, a calabash of pinole, and some manchets made of Arizonian flour, as yellow and almost as solid as gold. Arms had I none, for, like Anacreon, I had no more sanguinary ambition than to shed the blood of the grape. At first the blanket was as nothing, but under the heat of an Arizonian forenoon it became intolerable and I flung it away.

The Picacho was another point of danger, which it was advisable to pass in the night. This is a celebrated peak in Arizona, and, overtopping all others, serves as a landmark far and wide on the mighty desert. It is a vast clump of rock, standing isolated at one end of a cross-range through which the road passes; and looks much like an unfinished church-tower.

At night I slept under the boughs of a cat-claw, a very large and lordly sleep, with North America for my bed, for my pillow Arizona, and for my blanket the great blue heavens. Ah! it is worth a century of dull, thick-crammed years to lie down alone in a mighty land, and at midnight look up to the shining myriads of heaven, where they roam in the measureless void! To fling off one's airy counterpane in the morning, to sit up on one's bed and behold the gorgeous East, and look face to face at the sun, as he too rises in the greatness of his glory from his couch in the mountains—this, this is liberty. Arizona is mine. America is my house. The notched top of the Picacho is my fender. The universal atmosphere is my chimney. Bring me my coffee and cigars.

Instead thereof I munched some biscuits and some red prickly pears, and washed it all down with dew, sipped from rocky goblets. Having slept till morning, I had no way but to go on through by daylight.

The whole view of the pass seems done in miniature, and is as dainty in outline as any photograph. Yet one walks long mile after mile, up the easy swell of the plain, then between the noble and mighty walls of porphyry, but still on the plain, which is a mile in width. Being more copiously watered here by the showers that run along the sierra, saddle-like, it brings forth plenteous grass, and charming dots of bright-green groves, mesquites, greenwoods, cat-claws and pitahayas. Then down, by a descent as long and as easy, along a sandy avenue winding among the little trees.

Once down on the level of the desert again, where the few stunted bushes needed no scanning, I plodded on in the deep sand, without looking much around. All at once—I cannot think to this day how they got so near—I saw a band of mounted Indians approaching. My blood turned prètty cold, and I felt a faint and dizzy sickness; but it was worse than useless to attempt to escape, so I stopped and stood motionless. That pause probably saved my life, for it enabled me to collect my scattered senses a little, and thinly cloak my very genuine terror under a semblance of idiocy. They saw I was wholly in their clutch, and rode quietly forward.

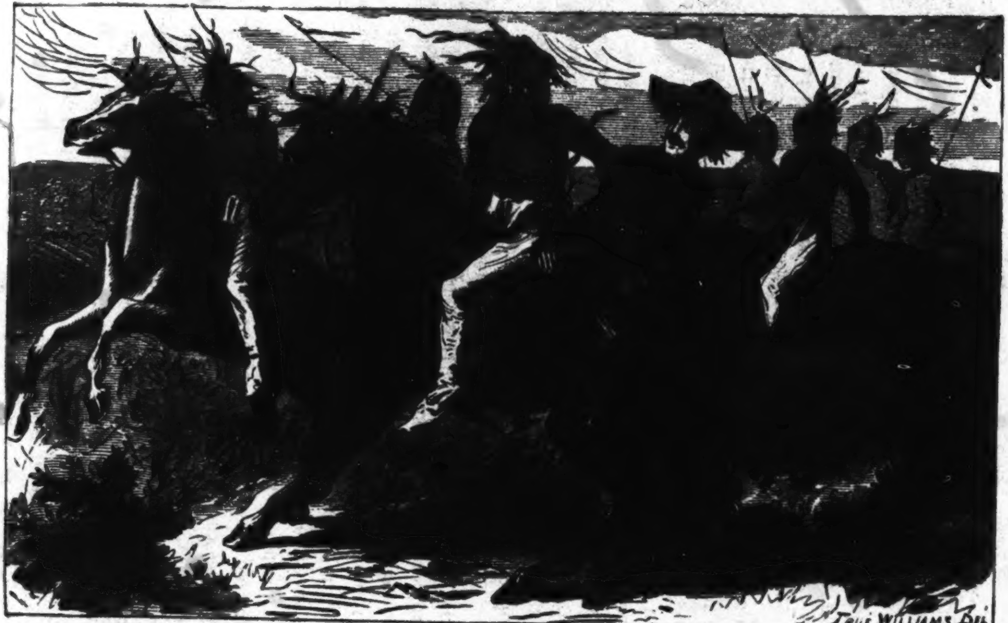
After a few moments, swallowing down my heart with a convulsive gulp, I advanced to meet the foremost, wreathing my face in what must have been a pretty ghastly hysterical smile, for I dared not let my voice show how I trembled. I handed the chief my calabash, in which I purposely had some sprigs and sticks grotesquely arranged. He took it, surveyed it curiously and cautiously, smelled of it, found it was empty, then dashed it on the ground with a grunt of immeasurable contempt.

Then there came to me a happy thought. All savages are vain. My mirror! my mirror! I handed it to the chief open. In the twinkling of an eye he saw before him that face which, to most mortals, is the dearest one on earth, his own, which for forty years had been to him a blank; and his savage pride was kindled. He gazed at himself with much satisfaction for several moments, then handed it to another, or, rather, another one snatched it, then another, and so it went around. Some of them, like the chief, never relaxed a muscle, but most of them broadly grinned or laughed outright like children, when they beheld their countenances. Then the chief took it again, and looked at it long and steadfastly, with unmistakable and unabated admiration.

All this gave me time and confidence. It gave me a sort of hold upon them. Now play for your sweet life, I said to myself, like a captured mouse. I began to execute a variety of absurd grimaces and gestures, as expressive of delight at the meeting. Ha! old Copperhead, my lad, give me your hand! I will give you a lock of my hair at parting, but I beseech you don't take it all. I seized and shook his hand, and clapped him on the thigh, as he sat before me on his horse. He was evidently not at all displeased at this, for he smiled faintly, but did not take his eyes from the mirror. Then I stroked down my infant beard, and rubbed my hand over his smooth chin, and laughed like a maniac. This did not appear to please His Greasy Majesty so well, but he showed no resentment.

Their curiosity over the mirror having abated somewhat, they began to plunder my traveling-bag. Some things I surrendered up without expostulation; others I struggled for mildly, playing the lunatic as well as I could, and succeeded in saving my precious note-book, though they tore it not a little before they could satisfy themselves that it was of no value. The chief seemed to be somewhat impressed in my favor, being dubious in his dark mind what kind of mortal I could be, and he presently muttered something, while looking at the glass, which made them desist.

At last they turned to ride away, and one of them motioned to me to mount behind him. I would have given a farm for the privilege of not doing it, but it might have been imprudent to refuse. So I climbed up behind him, but purposely got on wrong side before, with my face turned toward the tail, skimmington fashion. At this my grim captors were not a little amused, but they rode briskly away.


TRUE WILLIAMS DEL.

CAPTURED.

Will they then carry me away captive after all? I wondered, and my forebodings grew darker than before.

But I made myself as disagreeable to my captor as I dared, by clapping my heels under the horse's belly, by swinging my arms wildly about and vociferating like a foolish man, and by bumping my back against his occasionally. The horse became restive under these proceedings, and kicked up a couple of times, whereupon the Indians laughed heartily. Then he stopped suddenly and executed a vigorous estrapade, and with this the fellow made me dismount. To avert the consequences of the anger I feared might have been aroused, I ran to a horse, opened his mouth, and pulled out his tongue to look for his age, instead of inspecting his teeth. This again diverted the savages, and seemed to be the last link of evidence which convinced them I was an incurable fool, not worth the capture. They grunted together, looking doubtfully at me, and when I shook hands with them, and with many ridiculous gestures turned to go away, to my great joy they made no opposition. Only once I turned to look back, and again they were gathered around the mirror. "And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew."

These Indians were remarkably well-mounted, but most of them wore no clothing but a breech-cloth and long buckskin leggings, to shield their legs from the chaparral. One of them had a scarlet cloth wrapped tight about his head, turban-like, shading his eyes a little, and the chief had a gaudy Mexican serape. From their small stature I suppose they were Tonto Apaches, but their color was brassy, more like that of a Chinaman than that of an Indian. Their little bodies were scrawny and emaciated, and their faces bore, in addition to that stupidity which has gained them their appellation of Tonto(fool), more hideous ugliness and pure Asiatic cruelty than is seen in any other Indian. Let us be glad that America has borne but one such ghastly race, only one such perfect type of the hellish fiends.

That morning soon after my escape, I had the rare pleasure of beholding the morning star in the zenith, though the sun was shining fiercely resplendent. I accepted it as a good omen, and the sequel will reveal how much it was worth.

Very soon afterward it began to rain,—the last fall of the summer rainy season—and it continued without a pause all that day and night and all the next day and night. Every voice in that vast desert was hushed, save the ceaseless, shrilling patter of the rain.

All at once an enormous Indian dog came out of the dripping chaparral a few rods before me, and stopped motionless. I was more scared than when I saw the Apaches, for I feared an ambuscade. But after he surveyed me for a moment, he gave one breathless, frightened bark, then turned and went tearing through the bushes. His precipitate flight showed there was no ambush to be feared.

The loose soil of these alkaline deserts when dry will yield such a cloud of dust as to conceal one horseman from another ten feet distant. But in this pouring rain it speedily became soft, and, in wading across the shallow seas of water, I would sometimes go knee-deep into the thin mud. It became dark, appallingly dark, and I lost the road. The light of Blue Water was nowhere to be seen, and there was nothing to do but to make a night on the desert. All night long I was perched in that warm rain, on a sage-bush, whose roots made a solid clump, and kept me from sinking, where I caught now and then a cat-wink of sleep.

At Blue Water I found a large man and a small Mexican in a flat mud-house. The man had a red, sullen face, and he was continually muttering of neglect. "Here I am," said he—before I had been there ten minutes—"keeping his station in a desert, and making money for him, and he let that wagon come out from Tucson, and never sent me nothin' to eat. I don't care nothin' for the concern; it's *him* I'm making the money for. Here I am, liable to be killed, making money for him, and he don't send me nothin', and let that wagon come out without sending anything, and I'm living on mackerel, and wrote him three times." If he said this once, he said it forty times while I was there; and yet he was taking as good care as he possibly could of his employer's affairs.

Nothing convinced me more of the cowardice of the Apaches, when there is any manly fighting to do, than the fact that this man defended himself here alone. The Camanches would make short work with it, if it were in Texas.

CHAPTER XVI.

DOWN THE RIVER OF DESPAIR.

NOBODY who has not made the journey of the plains can understand the feeling of relief and satisfaction with which the weary emigrant, reaches the Pimo villages at Sacaton. For more than nine hundred miles he has lived in constant fear, for even in the valley of the Rio Grande lurk the most deadly enemies.

But now he has arrived at last among the Pimos, of whom he has been hearing praises for some hundreds of miles. Now at least he is safe, and he feels almost at home. He can turn out his poor weary oxen and his jaded horses, to pasture all night wherever they will, and take sweet and large rest without being huddled about the wagon. He can spread his stock of blankets and beds under the balmy skies of Arizona, and lie down with his family beside the cool and plashing music of the Gila, and take his rest till morning, without fear and without peril.

The fame and the dread of the Pimos are a tower of strength, and as a wall of defense about him; he shall hear the horrid and heart-sickening yell of the Apaches no more. No more shall he shudder in his sleep, as to his dreaming eyes appears a horrible vision of his helpless infants murdered. All night he shall sleep in peaceful quietness, and awake to a sunrise made glorious with "the pomp of Persian mornings," for he reposes in the little empire of the Pimos, within which for the paleface there is only and forever peace.

Sacaton is the point where the traveler from Tucson first sees the Gila. The first human being on whom my eyes had rested for many a league was a Pimo, who wore no clothing to speak of save a ragged military blouse. Mounted on a beautiful, little bay jennet, he came tearing up the road, with his long Chinese queue, only a shade darker than his skin, whipping the air behind him, like a lash.

Presently I overtook a numerous family of the tribe, journeying down the river with all their household substance, in quest of another home. Whatever the wretched squaws could not carry was loaded on three scrawny, hammer-headed dobbins, which resembled animated saw-bucks. The gentleman, being a man of family, felt the necessity of complying with the proprieties sufficiently to wear a scarlet breech-cloth, deftly tied, with two ends dangling almost to the ground. He also indulged in a scarlet shirt and a string of beads. He was about five and a half feet tall, stooping and sunken-breasted, with a broad black face, pleasant look, and very long arms.

He talked with me half an hour, in grunts and Spanish, and smiled incessantly from first to last, so that I could have believed myself again in Mexico. He gave himself particular trouble to induce me to walk on this side of the road, because on that side there was a little mud, and then, with much blandness of aspect, asked a piece of tobacco for his services, so that I could have believed myself again in *la bella Napoli*. He had none of that shame-facedness which Homer says is a bad thing in a beggar.

The squaws and pappooses also had long queues, and wore, first, beads, second, short cotton petticoats. Their household stuff they carried wearily along on their bended necks and shoulders, in shallow flaring baskets, woven of roots, hopper-shaped, on four rods, two of which, as they walked, projected far forward like great snail-horns. Their serene lord unloaded and loaded them whenever they rested —an instance of devotion which was almost pathetic.

The Gila like its great congener the Rio Grande, is highest in summer, from rains and melting snows. It writhes and wallows in its tortuous channel, and seems intent on devouring its own banks. Often while you are standing on the brink, a tall column of earth topples over, and strikes a mighty trough in the waters, with a stupendous thud, or carries over a proud and lofty cottonwood, whose green boughs the filthy waters straightway leap upon and drag and trample down. Here and there a long and shining bar of silt is thrust out, like a tongue, and has for its root, trees rent up as by Enceladus warring with Pallas, and heaped up high in masses, with their long roots sniffing the air in a vain quest for their wonted moisture.

The river flats bear no grass—nothing but some ragged and forlorn shrubs, and some shriveled purslane, hardly recognizable as the weed whose dropsical stems are the pest of the Northern farmer's garden, and the terror of his children after school. The alluvium runs up by an ascent so easy, and knits its edge to the sandy plain by a suture so well concealed that one is not aware he has passed it, except by the change in the flora.

The whole valley is drearily flat, and indescribably ragged and desolate, and the reddish burnt-looking hills are pigmies compared with the lordly old mountains which look down in savage grandeur upon the Rio Grande; surely, I cried, I am now in the back-yard of the Republic. But after all I really like the valley of the Gila for its unmitigated and thorough-going hideousness. These green and splendid pillars of pitahaya, and the exquisite little greenwoods seem misplaced and wasted on these plains of an extinct hell.

Yet the soil is surpassingly fertile in the Pimo Reservation, a tract about four miles wide and twenty-five in length, and has yielded with Egyptian prodigality for a thousand years. The warm and turbid waters of the Gila, being spread upon it in irrigating ditches, maintain this fertility unimpaired. The Pimo wheat is beautifully sound and plump.

One noon as I sat at lunch under a mesquite, there came an old Pimo, exceedingly wrinkled and withered, with scarcely a rag to his body, and sat down by me, and remained a long time motionless as a statue. At last he reached out his hand and remarked ;—

"Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!"

I gave him a lump, which he mumbled as solemnly as if he were chewing his last cud before being hanged. I don't wonder much, for it was about the most villainous bread that any dog ever took into his chops. After a long, motionless silence he ventured one eye on me again, and, seeing the last morsel about to disappear, he reached out his cadaverous hand again, and grunted. "Fish not with this melancholy bait for this fool gudgeon" of a biscuit, O Solomon Pimo! I could give it to you with much better grace, if, like that other gentleman you would only grant me that inimitable and paternal smile.

A Pimo village looks like a lot of enlarged ant-hills. Each wigwam is a low mound, resembling our gauze butter-covers, with a square bottom, and is composed of a wicker-work frame, thatched with straw and covered with a layer of common earth a foot thick.

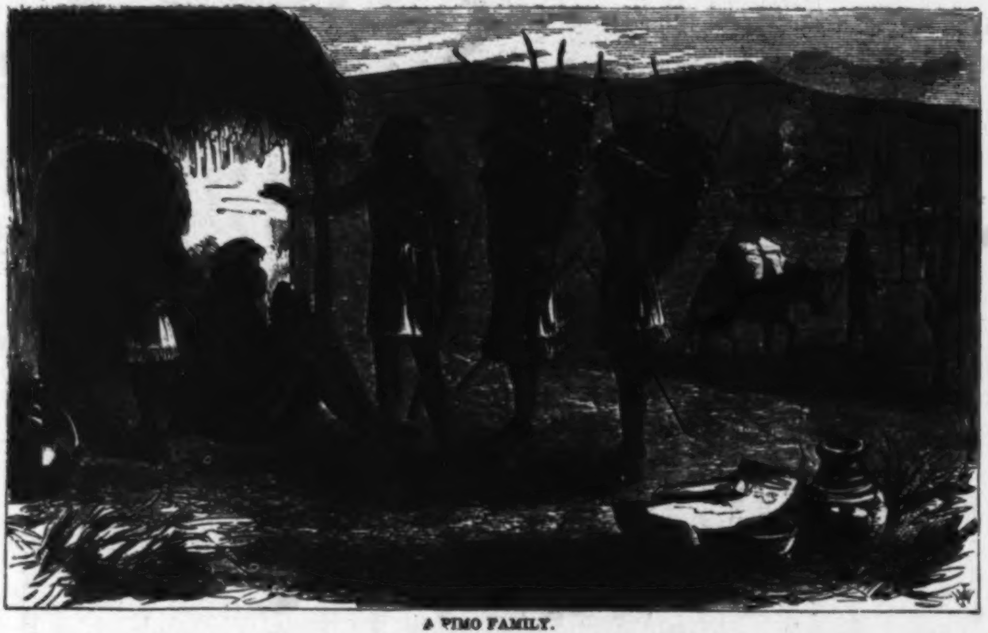
The Pimos live most of the year under mere shades or arbors of brush-wood, keeping these wigwams as storehouses. I crawled on all fours into one of them, and found it full of huge vessels, woven of bark and straw, demijohn-shaped, and filled with their beautiful wheat; immense spherical *ollas* of red earthern-ware, garnished with black streaks; mats, pumpkins, wooden bowls, etc. I also found what I thought was a graven idol, and congratulated myself on having discovered an indubitable evidence, against Mr. Bartlett, of their Aztec origin, in that the image bore the lineaments of Montezuma. But when I carried it out, the Pimos laughed heartily, and gave me to understand that dolls are not the exclusive possession of civilized babies.

Among the Pimos, the women not only own and inherit all the land, (not in common, as among most savages, but in severalty,) but they perform all the labor. Some of them were winnowing wheat, by pouring it down in the wind; some were rubbing parched wheat on a hollow stone; others cooking pancakes on the coals. The flat-breasted braves, however, condescended to make themselves useful by swinging the pappooses in their hammocks, which operation they performed with very commendable meekness and docility.

The consequence of this is, that the squaws are handsomer than the braves proportionately, as, indeed, the women seem to be in all southern latitudes. Is it because the men being more indolent than those of sterner climates, but having no less authority than they over the gentle sex, impose on them those very labors which alone can create the *mulier formosa superne?*

Of course, the men are intensely worthless, but they are kind, and peaceable, and have been the steadfast and traditional friends of the whites. Only when the squatters began to trespass on their ancient home and legal reservation, did they become somewhat thievish in certain instances. Mr. D. Wooster, who lived several years among them, speaks with the greatest enthusiasm of their virtues:

> "Their village has been the sure city of refuge to people of our race for more than three hundred years. Pursued by savages, the white man has ever found them his friend and avenger. Women and children, naked and



A PIMO FAMILY.

hungry, with torn and bleeding feet, coming up from the Rio Grande, or from the Colorado, have there found friends, and home, and food, and shelter, and protection, and escort on their weary way.

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"All travelers will bear testimony to their simple virtues and generous hearts. I have left my only child in their houses miles from my home for hours. They have divided their delicacies of food, their hulled wheat and sweet bread with me and mine when they had none to spare. They have done this to Spaniards, to Mexicans, to all with white blood of whatever nation for centuries.

* * * * * * * *

"The Government of the United States should draw a zone in the heavens and the earth around the lands of this historic people, a league in breadth, and allow no white man to settle within it forever and forever. A monument to charity should be built at the margin of the eastern and western deserts, at either extreme of their reservation, and it should be inscribed above with a few of the good deeds of this long-suffering people, the humblest of the poor forgotten children of God."

Despite the surrounding hideousness, this one little oasis occupied by the Pimos is the home of more old cob-webbed legends than any other spot of similar extent in the Union. This strangely-brilliant and tinted atmosphere is rich in suggested stories of those brave old Spaniards, whose wild, wide wanderings so long ago, put to shame our later achievement; and far back beyond all these, beyond even the mystical seven cities of Cibola, lie those perished empires, flourishing in unrecorded centuries, when,

"All day this desert murmured with their toils
Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked, and wooed
In a forgotten language, and old tunes,
From instruments of unremembered form,
Gave the soft winds a voice."

Here are miles upon miles of their irrigating ditches, digged with incredible labor, or, perchance, with some strange and forgotten enginery; the beautiful fragments of their pottery; their pictured rocks; their Casa Grande, already fallen into ruins when Torquemada played at school, and danced the gay *Cachuca*. Here, too, the Fontine fables teach, the Aztecs wandered long ago in quest of their Promised Land, looking for the sign of the eagle tearing the serpent, and guided, as Spanish bigotry believed, by the old Arch-enemy.

Here, too, is the Texan emigrant, drawling, begrimed and tall, his dangling trousers of jeans ripped by many a mesquite, weary and worn to the last degree by his long, long search for *his* promised land. But he has neither lost or forgotten any of that glum, "I-reckon-so" hospitality which he brought with him from Western Texas. On a fire which looks strangely wan and weary beneath this flaming sun of Arizona, his thin, sallow wife fries steaks, which are very tough after walking a thousand miles. It makes one's heart sick with pity to see this poor, haggard woman, and the piteous eagerness of her sunken eyes, as she listens while her husband asks:—

"Stranger, how far mout it be to Californy yet, do you reckon? You Darby! will you get over that 'ar tongue thar, now?" Upon that he shoulders the wretched beast over the tongue, and it staggers like a reed shaken in the wind.

"It is about two hundred miles."

"Well now, stranger, them thar oxens ca-an't stan' it much longer. Derned if I didn't hev to make a pot of lather this mornin' afore I could shave enough grass for 'em."

How many a family of emigrants, after dragging on their weary march for months across this great continent; amid the parching thirst by day; the perils, the alarms, the lonely vigils by night; looking hopefully foward to rest within this valley—to fresh lush grass for their jaded oxen, and to cooling shade and gurgling waters for themselves—have arrived at last only to find their graves beside the dismal banks of the hideous, the treacherous Gila! In our train there was for a time a family of those people who are commonly said to "make their living by moving," who had emigrated once from Texas to California, then returned, and were now crossing the continent for the third time. The problem of subsistence with this class is not so difficult as might be imagined. The Government stations have orders to distribute rations and ammunition to destitute emigrant families; and the measureless ranges of wild grass support their cattle.

The mother of this family had five children, of whom the youngest two were seldom out of her arms, whether in camp or wagon. Without a murmur and without a complaint, seeming to know no other law than the will of her husband—worthless vagabond that he was—she had followed him with that meek and piteous submissiveness which has in it more of heaven than of earth, but with that worn and saddened face so common to women living the lonely life of the Western frontier.

But three pilgrimages in succession across this dreadful continent were more than even her patient nature could endure. It was painfully evident to all in the train that this poor woman would never behold California again; and even her wretched husband was alarmed, and had left us, braving the perils of the Ninety-mile Desert alone, that he might hasten on more rapidly. At Maricopa Wells I overtook them, in company with several other wagons, where they were bogged down on an impassable flat, overflowed by the recent unparalleled rain-storms. The broad flat was literally gridironed with sudden creeks, running like frightened deer among the straggling sage-bushes.

And here in this hideous and lonely wild, while we lay on beds of brushwood, spread to keep our blankets from sinking in the fathomless slush; with the creeks on both sides of us roaring sullenly through the black and gusty night; the dismal yelping of the cayotes, that were unable to reach us, floating across the dreary sodden desert; while the pale thin flicker of a candle shone feebly out through the wagon-sheet, lighting up dimly the surface of the surging creeks; with the wailing babes around her, the spirit of the weary woman took its flight.

The Painted Rocks near Maricopa Wells, are an object of interest and speculation to every traveler. They stand quite alone, grouped together on a broad plain. The principal matter of speculation is the rude pictures of four-footed animals on them. We know from the investigations of Oregon scientists, in the John Day Valley, that the horse existed on the Pacific coast before the creation of man; but whether any horses ever existed among the Pimos or Aztecs before their introduction to the continent by Cortez, is something doubtful. Probably these pictures are intended for nothing but antelopes or other wild animals, rudely scrawled by the Pimos. But the representation of the sun, with its surrounding halo, plainly points to the ancient Aztec influence. These sun-pictures, taken together with the dark skins of the Pimos, their Mexican pudginess of stature, and the fact that they always build their doors opening eastward, in anticipation of the second coming of Montezuma, hint strongly towards an Aztec origin. They themselves firmly believe they are of Aztec descent. Torquemada asserted that they were; Pedro Font believed it; so did Coronado; but Mr. Bartlett rejects the theory on linguistic grounds. He thinks they were taught by the Mexicans to believe they are sons of Montezuma. But it is difficult to understand how the proud and exclusive Mexicans could have felt sufficient pride in this lowly race to desire to establish community of origin with them.

I could not distinguish the Maricopas from the Pimos, except by the difference in their bread. In the suburbs of a village, hidden away in a great mesquite brake, I came upon a merry circle of squat braves—the squaws eat by themselves—seated around a basket of wheaten cakes, of which they gave me one to taste. They were different from the Pimo *tortillas*, being as thick as a biscuit; and they were evidently boiled, and were unleavened and clammy, but very sweet. They masticated them without salt, water, or anything else whatever, except the abundant butter, apple-sauce, and honey of laughter. I confess I seldom felt so much moved to laughter myself as when I saw these gentle savages laughing so gaily over such an unutterably dry repast.

Everywhere along the river flats were visible the disastrous doings of the late unprecedented rain. The roofs of adobes (not the Pimo wigwams) had become soaked, and run down through the layer of brush-wood like mush, or crushed everything down by their weight. Walls were melted half-way down, or had toppled over in masses. Chimneys had dissolved like a candy-horse at Christmas.

At Maricopa Wells the Gila turns squarely to the north, and then runs around three sides of a quadrangle which is a desert forty miles wide, with a mountain rim on the three sides. Looking down across the vast margin of plain, before he enters the pass, being now away from the hideousness of the Gila, the traveler beholds again the strange and wizzard beauty, and the magnificent lawlessness of Arizona. The Gila really has no valley, and no river ranges. Spread out before you the tawny and mighty desert of Arizona; draw down through it the straggling greenery of the river's cottonwoods; mark a parallel line here, another there, some ten, some thirty, some forty miles from the river, and fling down on each a fragment of a reddish mountain. That is the valley of the Gila. Far out, in magnificent prospect of lilac distance, this tawny desert sweeps back to these fragments of ranges, and pours through, as between chubby fingers, into the vastness of the outer plateau.

This is grandeur, but in the pass, which is merely an isthmus of plain, there is surpassing beauty. All the ground is covered with autumn-gilded grass, as fine as eider-down; there are pretty bunches of silver-gray mint; and then there is the *biznaga*, thistle-rigged with spindles of prickles, like long amber teazels, glistening crisp and fresh, when sprinkled with dew, like cans of prickly honey. A wise little architect called the cactus wren, as if knowing that snakes cannot climb this most exquisite but most diabolical bush, builds its nest in its branches. But how on earth can it alight?

Then there is that most dainty little tree of Arizona, the greenwood, with leaves as big as squirrel's ears, and a trunk as smooth and as green as a water-melon. It often grows close beside the lordly pitahaya, their trunks touching; and you may see the giant reaching up fifteen feet above his pretty neighbor, like some green old bachelor vainly struggling, with both arms uplifted, to escape from the toils of some bewitching maiden. Half a mile away the rich red walls of porphyry tower above these splendid columns of emerald, heaped up, stone on stone, like some fine old English mansion in the Elizabethan style.

Sunset came soon after I emerged from the pass, and then all the walls of that great quadrangle of desert were illuminated and glorified with lilac, and amethyst, and orange, like that magnificent coronal of hills which encircles the City of the Violet Crown.

Though far from human habitation, I lay down without fear; but that night sleep was gone from my eyes, and slumber from my eyelids. The heavens so gorgeously pavilioned with one of those matchless Arizona sunsets;

the bewitching glamour of the fading, infinite plain; the pitahayas, like the earth-born giants of Apollonius, keeping solemn watch and ward about me in the soft desert twilight—all these kept a multitude of inchoate fancies, flowery imaginings, the first flush and breathings of an over-florid eloquence of description, trooping through my brain, and banishing slumber. A bright particular star came up, and sailed far up through the pass, and still I would be vagabondizing.

But at last, all this my glorious Oriental heaven of phantasmagoria revolved on its axis, and brought up the clear, calm firmament of sleep. One soft slumberous wave after another came drifting over me, and I was slowly drowning, drowning, drowning—lost—

What was that?

It was only some Arizona quails, bickering and quarreling about their shares of the roost. But this silly noise, only half-awakening me, filled me with a confused and sudden terror. There was no moon; the sky had clouded over, and I was—

> "Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
> With blackness as a solid wall."

In that awful moment, with a faint and sickening sense of despair, I jerked my hand frantically before my face, thinking I was blind, because I saw nothing. The appalling blackness of darkness sat upon me like a ghoul. Ah! for one pleasant voice, for one word to cast into this yawning grave of silence! I whispered, but shuddered at the thought of speaking aloud.

By chance I established a sort of communication with a prairie-dog or squirrel. I would strike with my heel on the ground, and he would respond by beating a quick tattoo on the side of his burrow—the dearest sound that ever entered mortal ears. Words cannot describe the sweetness of the sense of companionship, even of the meanest animal, in that frightful darkness. But presently he got sleepy, or waxed lazy, and he would answer me never a word.

Then again, "those thoughts that wander through eternity," began to go out, ranging through infinite space; groping, groping, flying, creeping in the black and formless air; and my very self, the "imperishable *ego*," was far away from that lonely desert. There passed before me men in long black robes, mysteriously beckoning and nodding—

That terrible yell!

Is it a lion, or a jaguar? There is another! They fight. The raging, the clutching, the gurgling and choking growls, and the screaming, the tearing of bushes—heavens! they are coming this way. I sit up, benumbed with terror; leap up; run blindly into the darkness; stumble over a bush; fall headlong. The yelling beasts surge along very near. I see nothing in the blackness but the fiery glare of their eyes, circling in mad whirls and lunges. Now one flees, and the other pursues. They are gone. The noise of the swift snapping and crash of bushes dies away, and all is silent.

For that night there was no more sleep, neither any dreams. All the remainder of it I lay pretty still where I fell, for a single movement might crack a sage-bush, and bring back the dreadful brutes. If they were California lions, there was probably little danger, for they are arrant cowards; but the jaguar will grip a man without hesitation.

It is a weary and a dreary walk across the jornada of Gila Bend. Half way across I flung myself under one of the dainty little greenwoods, on the margin of a dry arroyo, glistening too bright for any eye but the eagle's, with its golden sands, and gazed languidly out on the plain in its thin, pale September green, over which the pitahaya —sleepless Sentinel of the Desert—keeps his vigils, blinking drowsily at the far-off mountains of porphyry, till I fell asleep. Then I dreamed again—dreamed of my Northern home, odorous with the breath of honeysuckles and fresh butter; dreamed, too, in my thirst, of angling in the shining brook which babbled to my piscatorial boyhood; and to my dreaming soul the sweet old music of its ripples was crisp and cool as heart of melons, or draught from its bright waves.

As one emerges from the savage and gloomy gorge in the Estrella Mountains, his eye ranges over the vast stretch of the Gila Valley, until it rounds down beneath the horizon; and in the middle of it the azure summit of Chimney Peak is visible, a hundred and forty miles away. Distance, mere blue naked distance, and nothing else. And that is all to be passed over afoot! From that hour I loathed the Gila, and called it the River of Despair.

They told me I should overtake trains on the desert, well supplied with water; but I found none, and began to be grievously athirst. Beneath the flaming glare of the sun on an Arizona desert, the pedestrian without water weakens with alarming rapidity. Deceived, as many have been before, and thinking it was the faintness of hunger—there is not a little truthfulness in that Western phrase, "starving for water"—with infinite dry mumbling and munching, I ate half a biscuit. My mouth was as dry as a barrel of flour.

At last the sun went down, with all the fiercely resplendent pageantry of an Arizona desert; but, instead of bringing any relief of coolness, for a half-hour the evening was worse than the noon-day, for there came up from the heated plain, lately rained upon, a sweltering earth-reek, which, mingling with the warm and sickening stench of *cheriondia*, was almost stifling.

Far off, at the bottom of the road, there gleamed now and then through the cottonwoods a silvery wink of the Gila; but it perversely kept at the same distance. Mile after mile, mile after mile—and it came no nearer. The pitahaya never grows near water, and as one towering column of it after another slowly loomed above the horizon, and spread its great arms dimly out against the heavens, bitter was my disappointment.

It was all in vain. Weary and faint, I flung myself at last beneath a green wood shrub, and thought to sleep away my misery. But one who is acutely suffering from thirst cannot sleep, for he cannot inhale a satisfactory breath, but feels as if crushed by an intolerable weight, and fetches many a quick sigh, never more than a half-breath, and tosses restless as a Corybant. Probably fifty times during that miserable night, I toppled just over the sweet, delusive brink of slumber; but the instant I was unconscious, I would dream of water, clutch frantically at it, and straightway awaken. The oddest of these dreams was, that I saw a smith with a golden rod, from which, with a cold-chisel, he was slitting off gold dollars; and every time he sliced off the shining coin, he dipped the rod into a basin of sparkling water. Like the poor beggar of Bagdad, reaching out his hands for invisible potations, I snatched wildly at the basin, and awoke with a handful of grass.

In the morning, the cock at Gila Bend Station crowed almost over my head. Staggering down to the great *olla*, hanging by its neck in its swathing of cool and moistened gunny, I quaffed the arrears of thirty-six hours.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE HOME OF THE HEAT.

DAILY, as I journey down the Gila, it broadens out before me, and its current grows less turbulent. The banks are lower, and often there comes up through the cottonwoods the long gleam of its waters, as they go on their quiet way to the All-mother of Oceans.

Though the late rains had somewhat cooled the season, the steaming heat of the valley was intolerable. At noon I would lie under a mesquite, vast as an ancient appletree, and beat the faint air into motion. Sleep was impossible. It was good to lie on the uttermost verge of the shade, for the tree itself seemed, by its ceaseless inhalations, to exhaust all the air beneath it, and to seek in vain, by the listless, drooping tremor of its leaflets, to winnow a fresh breath to itself.

The endless chattering Arizona quails alone seem to be unconscious of heat. Not another bird is stirring. Hark where they come now! How much loquacity and cheery prattle of contentment there is, as they scud with infinitesimal steps between bush and bush, laughing and racing like children just from school. Now the whole covey come in sight under a sage-bush, with their tiny crests curling forward; the leader utters a sharp cry, every neck is stretched up, then all whiz away, with every crest streaming back.

Yonder an impertinent pup of a cayote sits on his haunches under a bush, panting and lolling. He eyes my every motion, and stretches his neck in every direction, sniffing for something eatable. Now he scrapes his ear with his paw, to free it from the myriads of mosquitoes which suck his blood. When I rise up from my notes, and toss a stick at him, he impudently trots over to another bush, squats, and begins to loll again.

Even the mosquitoes stop a moment to hang out their tongues, before they commence their labors. Z-z-z-z-zip! One pauses a moment to wipe the perspiration from his brow. Slap! Aha! gringo, you announced your arrival with too loud a trumpet.

At Kenyon a veteran hunter and myself, to avoid the mosquitoes, slept on the naked sand, close beside the river. We were lulled to sleep by the rippling river, pouring around us a sweet mist of music, as Pindar says of Apollo's lyre; but I was soon awakened by a cold clammy nose touching my face, followed by a sniff, sniff, sniff, and a warm breath. Flinging out my hand suddenly, I struck the soft fur of a cayote. The animal ran away with a low startled growl, but stopped a few rods away, and commenced barking.

Who that is an American has not owned a youthful and adventurous hound, and seen him snuffing eagerly through the high grass on a fancied trail, with tail valorously erect, until, beholding a white stump, he gave one long, frightened bark, followed by several short ones, and ran away with his tail between his legs? Just so begins the leader of a pack of cayotes. One after another joins in, till the whole cry is in full chorus. "Oft in the stilly night," when I was not sleepy, especially in the early morning, I have lain in my blankets, and listened to their thin, puppy chattering, with a most delicious and lazy happiness.

The noise of this one attracted many others, and they seemed to agree together to split the ears of all owls, and of all other proper animals of night. Like Hogarth's musician, the hunter presently became enraged, snatched his revolver, and fired into the populous darkness. An appalling squall, coming apparently from a whelp, told that his dark shot had not been in vain.

In consequence of the tumbled and slung topography of the Gila, there are many bits of mountains at right angles to the river. Some poke it on this side, some on that side, and sometimes the string reaches quite across the valley, with a gap in the middle that the river may creep through.

The Burnt Hills, below Kenyon, are such a fragment of a range. On either side of it there is a long, elevated, narrow plain, like an awning along a house, perfectly nude, and laid with stones as black as pitch. This fearful plain is chasmed and rent with ravines, "depe diches and darke and dredfulle of sighte," along whose borders the scorching heat runs and wriggles on the black bowlders like serpents.

In the awful solitude of this scathed and blackened waste, here and there stands up a pitahaya, like a column marking the site of a buried city; and, to make the illusion more complete, it sometimes stands on a little monticle, like a heap of ruins.

Passing through the gap, I beheld from the exit of it a landscape which Dante could have studied with advantage, before he made out the topography of the orthodox medieval hell. On three sides are low mountains, lurking in savage gloom on the horizon, and burnt to redness; at my feet, the racked and battered blackness of the gorges; farther west, the grisly waste of the desert, through which, in its hideous chasm, the Gila wallows away, like that stream over which Charon ferries the shuddering ghosts. It was nearly sunset, and away to the west a shower was falling. As the sun went down, it peered through a crevice in the clouds, and turned the rain into falling blood: and in that instant all the concave of heaven, and the air, and the desolate earth were red-lighted with a fierce and sullen luridness, as if it were indeed the very abode of the damned, horribly yawning with its quenchless fires.

Let right down into the middle of this blackened waste of plain is a singular basin, about a mile in diameter, across which runs the Gila. A ghastly massacre of a family by the Apaches has made this spot forever memorable as Oatman Flat. There is not in American history a tragedy more appalling than that which crowned the saddening history of this family of emigrants; and there is not on earth a resting-place so hideous as that which holds their bones.

On the burning, black plain I hoped to escape the cursed mosquitoes; but they no sooner grew hot and tired, than they calmly sat on my hat in myriads, and rested themselves. If I stood still, they jumped off, and my head became enveloped in a churning cloud, a singing nimbus; if I ran, it was the middle, bobbing nucleus to a train like that of Encke's comet. Once I took off my hat and coat, laid them softly down, then rose and fled like the wind. Then I stopped, and looked back with a grim smile of triumph, but in ten seconds, they all arrived with cheerful countenances.

Presently I saw an object at a little distance, which looked like a mule. Approaching me, the object suddenly cried out, with a voice that seemed to issue from under a feather-bed, "Whoa, Mike!" Making a desperate effort, I brushed away my cloud sufficiently to see that there was a man in the other cloud, with his head muffled in a silk handkerchief, and his hands in his pockets. We laughed, and then he explained that he was hunting stray mules, and had also mistaken me for one of those animals.

The river lurks now no longer in a tortuous trough, over-arched by cottonwoods, but spreads out its waters in a vain semblance of Mississippi majesty. Sometimes it rolls broadly down through long and silvery leagues, again it creeps in two shrunken and pitiful runnels around some mighty island of shining ooze. Here countless regiments of ducks hold their noisy musters, while they flounce and puddle in the water, or stand and prune their sunny feathers, and with their broad bills ladle the water up over their backs. Great white cranes, and herons with crooked necks, lazily winnow the vast waters between snag and snag, and emit at times, a solemn "kouk!" In the watches of the night, you shall hear an uncertain and unearthly croak, like the sneeze of a hippopotamus. The lazy flapping of some huge fish, wallowing in the fertile waves, is followed by the sudden stoop and flutter of the kingfisher, as he struggles lubberly up with a scaled Gila trout.

The old Andalusian or rather Moorish adobe will probably remain long in these treeless countries, especially among these nerveless people. And the Texans who live in a Mexican climate seem to acquire very soon the Mexican nostrils, and retain the unsavory quadrangle for the horses and goats at the rear of the house. The dwelling is, therefore, like the Mississippi double log-cabins in shape, having a broad passage through the middle, leading back to the corral, of which the house forms one side.

But the Texan still has enough energy left to improve the Mexican pattern, by fronting it with a bush-canopy so broad and so thick that the space under it is almost like a cellar. This alone keeps his brains from being fried into a Mexican condition. Under this hangs the great olla, full of water, and everything that he eats, in little bags, to keep them from the ubiquitous and omnivorous ants. All among these pendant eatables, they trundle their beds about, wherever any one can find the coolest corner.

One of the characters who interested me, was one of those grand and serene Germans, with a floating gait, who are apt to have been crack swordsmen at the Universities, and who look at you with a level eye, as if to measure how little you know. He was distant to strangers, but exceedingly jolly with his friends, though always talking of himself, fluent in five languages, and polished in all the refinements of Europe. He had been a rake in his day, but was tamed at last by a great love, by a simple peasant girl, kind, sweet, lady-like by nature, with her dear little white apron, and pink cheeks—

"Two lovers in the *desert* vast,
Two lovers loving well at last."

Though I was burning with curiosity to learn his history, he was studiously reticent on all but his American life; but I think he was a nobleman, exiled with his little peasant girl, and finding his reward in a love whose depth and tenderness no words of mine could picture.

But the oddest genius was a huge old Agonistes, who, in this dreadful heat, seemed to be always wishing with Hamlet, "O that this too, too solid flesh would melt!" His shape was about like that of a wedge, standing on its small end. He had a long face, nearly concealed by a patriarchal beard, touched with gray; he always went bareheaded and barefooted, and wore his shirt outside his trousers, which were made of striped bedticks.

His cookery was miscellaneous to distraction. On a single stove he kept up such an amount of frying, fizzing, stewing, sputtering and singing as would have been creditable to a metropolitan restaurant. For four eaters, he absolutely covered a table ten feet long, with all manner of onions, stews, jams, pickles, preserves, canned stuff, vegetables, beans, tripe, molasses, and indescribable and unresolvable gallimanfries.

In the midst of all this frying, he would glance out of the window, and then shoot out of the house as suddenly as if he were trying to elude the fall of some crockery. There was a predaceous cow which kept making incursions into his corral, because he was too indolent to put up the bars staunchly. He would chase her around the inclosure, with his long hair flying, jump up three or four feet high, and strike at her with his toes, but invariably miss. Yet he was a kind-hearted old man, and those who knew him said he was compelled to rip up a bedtick for trousers, because he gave away so much clothing to vagabonds.

What kind of a civilization will ever grow up on these steaming, frying banks of the Gila? I wonder. Arizona is rapidly becoming as notorious as Louisiana for misgovernment. The isothermal line, which ought to bound the Union on the south, bows up above most of Arizona. It is too hot here for any good growth of republicanism.

If we had desired natural boundaries, the Gila and the Rio Grande form our proper western arch, just as the Gulf of Mexico forms the eastern; and Florida and Lower California are the natural outside abutments. All that part of New Mexico and Arizona which lies south of those two rivers is worse than useless to the Republic. If we had halted on their banks, they might have stayed up the pressure forever; but, now that we have crossed over them, there is no means of holding to the Union that fragment which lies below them, except by running a railroad through it, and tying the ends to New York and San Francisco. It must be kept vigorous by constant infusions of American blood, coming from colder latitudes.

One thing which surprised me was the health of the valley. Tucson has fresh, limpid water, and stands on an open desert, but it is infested with fever; while the inhabitants of this moldy valley protested they were always healthy. It is possible the salt and alkali have a kind of an antiseptic effect.

The arm of the Constitution plies laggardly in this far-off region. At Maricopa Wells I saw Apache captives who had been offered by the Pimos at forty dollars a head, while no American rebuked them, or hid it under a bushel. But they did not sell them. Why? The Americans wanted them for twenty-five dollars!

One evening I stopped in the camp of a little train of emigrants presided over by a woman. She was a vigorous matron, of about forty, fair and fresh, with a slightly aquiline nose, and a quiet, dignified manner of speaking to her teamsters, which made them know their mistress, and yet was the farthest removed from the tone of a virago.

Her life began in far Vermont, whence she followed a roving husband to Canada, to Kansas, to Texas. In San Antonio he died, and, after managing his affairs for a little while, to fill her cup of bitterness, she lost everything by fire. Everything, did I write? No; she had left five little children, and an indomitable will. By the aid of a few friends and her own heroic exertions, she collected together enough to start for California, which was now at last, to her unspeakable relief, almost in sight. She had only five armed retainers in her train, and alone with this little band she had made the journey across that great and howling wilderness.

She was a woman of culture and of ideas. Everything was tidy and ship-shape about her camp. Her mules were fat and sleek, unlike most of the emigrant teams, for, as one of her teamsters told me, she had sternly prohibited them from abusing the animals.

Thus she was emigrating to California, to give to her children, let us hope, that prosperity hitherto denied. Such a woman will be worth more to that State, than any dozen of the sick-faced counter-jumpers, broken-backed adventurers, and swaggering, bullying swashbucklers who swarm thither.

What kind of a town Arizona City may be, is known to the gods. I only remember a batch of mud-houses, among which were moving about some ghostly umbrellas, with a faint suspicion of whey beneath them. The staple articles of clothing worn by the inhabitants, are very broad umbrellas and very capacious boots. As soon as the sun sets, they fold their umbrellas, "like the Arabs, and as silently steal away" to certain moulds they have for that purpose, in the cool sand along the river, into which they pour themselves out of their boots, and in the morning emerge, solidified into the human form again.

My first experience in Arizona was in seeing firewood gathered with a crowbar; my second, in seeing hay cut with a hoe; my last, in eating butter with a spoon. Turning my back upon such a land, I looked over upon that fabled country, which rims all round with a golden and purple halo the dreams of our ardent boyhood. And it was a sight as uninviting as can be imagined.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WALKS ON THE DESERT.

KEEPING cool is one of the principal concerns of life at Fort Yuma. The Yumas have a method of doing so peculiar to themselves. They fill their long black hair with mud, which crushes the inhabitants thereof as effectually as Mount Ætna does the wicked Enceladus. Then they take a log into the river, and float tranquilly down with the current, with nothing but a shining orb of mud visible above the waters. Jeeheebay, the Parsee, says, the highest conception of Heaven is of a place where there is nothing to do. Doubtless the Yuma Indian could conceive no more ecstatic existence, than one wherein he might float down unwearied, through long summer days, lapped in the soft, warm waves of the River of Paradise. What wonder is it that the Pimos fix the locality of Heaven on the Colorado?

The banks of this river are very flat, and it is worth more than a drink of its seething porridge to venture over them. They are perfect man-traps. Across the desert there stretches a rocky ridge, through which the river rifts a shallow canyon. Thus the frail mud-walls of Arizona City are protected by a natural breakwater, and, across the river, Fort Yuma perches on the breakwater itself.

From the lofty walls of the fort I looked out over the haggard and sullen desert, and my soul exulted in the very greatness and savagery of its desolation. Ah! it will be worth a century of babbling in green fields and fiddling among flowers, to grapple once more, as on the Staked Plain, hand to hand with Old Hideous!

Who that has seen, can ever forget the last of the four pictures of Cole's "Voyage of Life?" In it an old man is seen, with his boat just entering upon the verge of the ocean, over which and all around him lowers the heavy murk of death, while his face, though most touchingly saddened and furrowed by the bitter conflicts of life, is radiant now with peace, as he goes tranquilly up towards the dim and shadowy walls of Paradise. My mind was carried back to that picture, more eloquent than all poetry, as I looked over on the mountains of the Colorado, ninety miles away, heaped up ridge behind ridge, with their wonderful semblance of walls, and towers, and domes, and spires, and minarets.

See, Nature is no bigot in building her imaginary Walhalla. The Mandarin shall find yonder his pagoda; the Norman, his massive hall; the Roman, his basilica; the Mohammedan, his mosque.

Then I went on down the Colorado towards Pilot Knob. Not far below the fort, an emigrant wagon had turned aside into the bushes, where a very happy event had occurred. There were some haggard squaws about with melons for sale, and one of them, who appeared to have no children of her own, was exceedingly interested in the affair.

A mile or two below Pilot Knob I ascended a few feet to the great plateau of Colorado Desert. For forty miles the road ran along a higher plateau of sand, which the fearful simoons are constantly shifting, and which sometimes surges over the trains like a fiery rain. League upon league I could look across it, as over an upheaved sea of liquid butter, not glaring to gaze upon, but very mellow, and most daintily crimped and crinkled with wind-marks.

And now the road begins to wade in white sand. O this abhorred winter, with its waste of dead limbs, and its perennial snows—wearily, wearily I tramp in their drifts—thrust into this arid middle and heat of autumn, with its gaunt and hungry air, its blinding white-hot shimmer, and its stifling winds! Sometimes I hear the faint chirrup of a cicala, and think, with Antipater, that it is sweeter than the swan. Occasionally a gad-fly buzzes past me, on its wide and lonesome flight. Even the crow, which labors heavily along with a strangely sharp, metalic winnowing of the air, holds a moody and solemn stillness, as if it were the last crow of time, flapping over the charnel-house of all the centuries.

Like Adam in Holbein's *Dance of Death* when he goes forth from Paradise, the traveler on this abhorred desert journeys ever side by side with the King of Terrors. That his fear and his dread may not be abated or forgotten by the shuddering pilgrim, the ghostly skeletons along the road grin horridly upon him. All the ground is whitened, as with hoar-frost, by the minute shells of myriads of periwinkles, which have perished in the old cataclysms that surged over this surface, and in the raging winds that burned over the waters, and have cheated the very sea of its rightful dominion here. I seemed to walk constantly in the center of a small circle of naked earth, but all else was frozen over with mystic ice.

But the ghastliest of all forms of death was the body of a deserter, who, avoiding the water stations in his dread of detection, perished miserably here, where his blackened corpse was scratched again from the sand by the cayotes. O, sad it were to lie down to die alone in this hideous wild, with the beasts of prey already ravening near in their impatience, and have the starting eye-balls seared, and the last hot and feeble breath snatched away by the hotter blast of the desert! The fiery sand creeps insidiously upon him, inch by inch, like drifting snow, sweeps in a hollowed space around his head, but eddies thick upon his glaring eyes, and burns his last glance to an indistinguishable blur.

What are those strange sounds? At first it is a discordant and rasping noise, as when one files a saw; then it changes to a sharp, tinkling jangle, like a chime of little tea-bells, only there is that strange half-clang produced by ringing bells under water. Approaching closer, and listening intently, I find that it is the buzzing of bees, and am gladdened,

> "As some lone man who in a desert hears
> The music of his home."

It is said that bees often perish in their long wanderings on the central plains of California. How, then, could these wing their weary way seventy miles through this dreadful weather, and return? Or did they, like Samson's swarms, hide their meat in the eater, and their sweetness in the strong?

New River, has a river for its source, and empties nowhere. Branching from the Colorado near its mouth, it slides easily down across the desert, in a little mesquite-dotted swale, and is swallowed up on a level seventy-five feet below the Pacific.

And on this desert, which is one of the hottest places on earth, whom of all men should I find as station-keepers but Yankees! Six of them in all, and among them a father and three sons from New Hampshire. The old gentleman, whose fame for stinginess met me ninety miles from his station, was ministering to the necessities of some disbanded soldiers. On the shelves in his most wretched and dilapidated mud-house there were cans of fruit, the inevitable sardines, pocket handkerchiefs, little cloth packages of cut tobacco, and a vast array of California wines, gorgeous in labels of brass and of scarlet.

From New River westward thirty-six miles without a drop of water. With a canteen full slung over my shoulder, I started at sunset. All through a long September night, by the soft desert light, in the soft desert coolness, I plodded through the brooding solitude, till moonset; then slept a little, waiting for daylight; then forward again, till the middle of the afternoon. Crunch, crunch, crunch, forever through the gravel. When the moon went down, it disappeared before it reached the level of the desert, and then I knew, by the ragged outline of that which crept over it in ghostly eclipse, that it had found the Sierra Nevada. Could I repress a shudder when I saw my sole companion of the night sink into the rayless blackness? Alone, all alone, in the darkness of the desert! As I watched the slowly sinking moon, leaving no star behind, there came to me something of that feeling of sadness which breaths through the message of the dying Ajax, when he bids farewell forever to the beautiful light.

In the morning I found I was approaching the Sierra Nevada between two long, low, dusty-looking cordilleras. Between these mountain spurs lies the valley of the Carriza, which is nothing but a stretched-out arm of the desert. In summer the Carriza has neither beginning of springs nor end of ponds. Mysteriously it sweats up from the sand, whose smooth broad face tells no tale of its origin; trickles down one summer's day, clear, cold and swift; then as mysteriously filters away. How beautifully it sinks, like the wounded dolphin tinging each dying moment with a new alkaline or pearly stain of exquisite brilliance!

A little above Carriza Station, I was rewarded for my early rising by an almost fairy spectacle, worthy of the "golden prime of good Haroun Alraschid." The tips of the mountains were just reddening with sunrise. Before me lay the white sand floor of the valley, sprinkled over with the cheriondia, of a bright sea green, little dead greenwoods, of a peculiarly crisp, cool, gray; and sage-bushes, yellowish-green. All the higher slopes of the mountains were thinly draped with a lilac haze, than which—

> "Never a flake
> That the vapor can make
> With the moon-tints of purple and pearl"

could be more daintily tinted. When the sun like a blood-red globe had arisen above the mountains, all this haze seemed to forsake the western slopes and gather about it, shrouding its beams in a cold pallor. The sickly light falling into the white valley upon the weird, spectral, Arctic foot-hills, those tropical icebergs, wrought a ghostly transformation. All the shrubbery was blanched in this mildew of sunshine, and the whole valley seemed to leer with blight, as if at the approach of the haggard King of Terrors. Not on the final morning of Time shall the sun fling his wan and pallid glare so cold through the stagnant air upon the Last Man.

There was a detachment of discharged soldiers on the road, marching down to Wilmington. I walked and talked many hours with a little blue-eyed boy, with a downless face, but a plenty of sunny curls on his head, who was a three year's veteran, a corporal, honorably discharged from the army of the Republic. Through all the unutterable abominations of garrison life on the frontier, he had "kept the whiteness of his soul."

"Why," said he, with such artless innocence, that I could not but smile, "I am very glad, after being three years in such horrid ways, to talk with somebody whose conversation is instructive, and not sprinkled, every other word, with oaths."

We sat down by a spring of greasy water, filled our canteens, then walked on again.

"I was brought up in New York," he continued, swinging his canteen over his shoulder, "but I never see or heard of such dreadful wickedness as there is in the United States Regulars. I was in a mess with a rowdy set, a lot of real bloody scamps; and they had a regular conspiracy to make me stand treat, and spend all my money, as they did. I have some hundreds saved up, but there isn't a man in my mess, and only two in the whole company, besides me, that have a cent to their names, on the face of the living earth."

"They badgered you a good deal, then."

"Why, this very morning, when you came and warmed yourself by our bivouac fire, as soon as you were gone, they crowded around me, a dozen at once, and asked me 'What did you say to that citizen?' 'What business had that citizen in camp, talking with you?' They were perfect spies on everything I did. There is one man in my mess, I am certain, who, if he could get a chance, wouldn't hesitate to murder me, not so much to get my money, but because I wouldn't spend it. And to spend it in such a way, too! As if it were not enough to make one spend it for grog, I must bet on their chicken-fights, their lice-fights, their toad-fights, and such brutal things.

"But you could appeal to the office[illegible]

"O, precious little they cared, most [illegible]hem. I tell you anybody who will go into the United States Regulars in time of peace, is a thief; or else a fool, like me; or else he is poor and has to do it. My Captain was good to the boys, because he wanted to be popular; the Major was a real good man anyhow; but the rest of 'em"—here he significantly held up his hand, and executed a filip with his forefinger and thumb. "They made us give them a part of our pay for a 'company fund,' to buy luxuries for the boys that were sick in hospital; and then, while we were living on hard-tack, they bought wine and canned fruit for themselves. Why, I have seen the boys many a time, when we were in garrison, and there was no excuse under the sun for the commissary not having enough grub, so near starved, that they would dig up these Adam's-needles, and cook the roots, just like the Apaches."

"Our venerated Uncle Sam never hears of such things."

"Indeed he don't." But it was good enough for us, for being such big fools. If ever I go into the United States Regulars again, I hope I may have to eat baked roots all my life."

Pleasant to my eyes beyond description, was a white frame-house, after those thousand miles of mud-huts. This solitary house, neat as a New England cottage, was Vallecito. We had wandered up nearly fifty miles between the haggard cordilleras, till they were now only a half-mile apart; and right down into this valley, here all hoary-gray with stunted century-plants, and reeking beneath the avalanches of heat which roll and quiver down the mountains, the fifty green acres of the Vallecito oasis are flung together.

It is a perfect Paradise, a Garden of Adonis in the wilderness. The pretty cottage, embowered in vines and peach-trees, in an atmosphere redolent with mellow peaches in the grass, and with cool milk in the spring-house; the bright-green foliage of the ever-welcome cottonwoods, and the willows bending tenderly over infant rills; the Arcadian and pastoral simplicity of the Diegeno brushwood huts, stacked about with golden fodder, and floored with creamy pumpkins, over which little swarthy babies tumbled and cackled with the kids and the dogs; and, above all else, the sweet music of summer birds, silent for a thousand miles—all this in the very middle of the horrible desert!

Beyond Vallecito I was overtaken by a little man in a very little spring-wagon. He had a face as round as a button, and very red eyes, and he was all the while drinking something from a coffee-pot. When he came up, he slackened his pace a little.

"Warm day," said I.

"You bet," said he. A slight pause. Another drink from the spout of the coffee-pot.

"Come from the States?" said he.

"I am recently from the Eastern States; yes."

"Get in," said he, motioning with his elbow toward the vacant space on the seat.

"No; I thank you," said I. Up goes the coffee-pot again.

"Want to work?" he asked, changing his lines into his right hand, and twisting round in his seat to look at me.

"I thought people didn't have to work in California."

"You bet your life they do," said he. Then presently, "Better get in."

"No; I am walking for a living."

"You bet," said he; and then he drove on again. Almost the last thing I saw of him before he vanished from sight, was his white Chinese hat tipped back, and the new coffee-pot on a level with the same, brightly glinting in the sunlight.

You can classify half the Californians you meet, by the manner in which they speak that phrase. A great majority of them pronounce it in the headlong, careless way, "You *bet*," which accentuation indicates about the largest amount of personal indifference toward yourself and all other human beings that you can easily imagine. The man who says "*You* bet," is somewhat reflective, and does not spend his money freely. Beware of him; he is a subjective man; one of those,

> "Whose visages
> Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;"

he reads you through and through. The man newly arrived from the East timidly says, "You bet." Your portly men, sportsmen, and carriers of canes, who know their words are rather empty, and always need to be boiled down, have it, "You bet your *life*," or "You bet your sweet *life*."

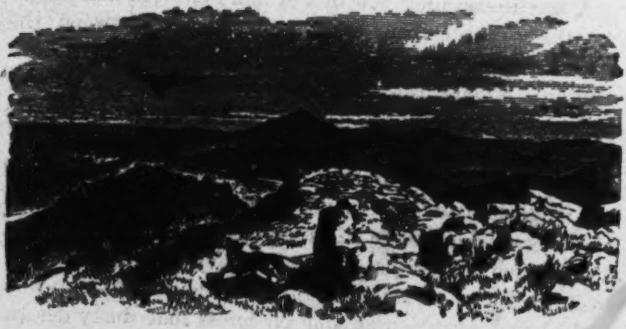
Pretty soon after this I reached the top of this long arm of desert, which is thrust thus into the mountains, and turned abruptly aside into the famous San Felipe pass. Mile after mile the road wanders up into the mountains, on a natural railroad grade, along the bed of an arroyo; sweeps gracefully around many a jagged headland of greenish or bird's-eye granite; threads a labyrinth of wanderings, which have in one corner a savage cat-claw, in another, a delicate mimbre; ever up, and up, so long and so easy.

Then all at once, the road wedges itself in between two mighty walls, a thousand feet high, perhaps, so near together that a very wide vehicle would with difficulty pass between. Ah! if there should come an earthquake now, and bump these walls together! Presently there stands straight before us a perpendicular, water-chiseled precipice, and the road surges away upward and eastward, climbs around by wild and dizzy ways, pitches at a breakneck rate down a steep hill, then mounts another, and so at last tramps steadily up through a vast and flaring gorge into the mighty pass.

On top of a huge gray bowlder I sat down to rest, and to bid farewell, as I supposed, to the desert. But no; for, like that "lean fellow" whose dwelling place it is, the hungry desert will have its rounded dues. It clutches in its lean fingers the granite heart of the mountains; and, sitting on their very summits, laughs in scorn over the valleys on which it has spread its shroud of dearth.

Then I ascended the highest mountain there was in sight, and from the summit beheld nothing but a herd of stubby humps, which looked as if they had been mauled back when they tried to rise. They are like the mountains of Texas, bald, hot, gray, stupid; without trees, or cataracts, or any yawning chasms; not shooting up any pinnacles gloriously into high heaven; bastard mountains.

The Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range interlock here in a confused, tumbling system of hills; but, as you look toward the Pacific, you can easily recognize the summits of the Coast Range proper, by the Alpine freshness of their greenness. Great joy is that to the weary pedestrian. From this hour he bids farewell to the chaparral. The thickets of the Coast Range are not thorny.



CHAPTER XIX.

HONEY IN GREEN HILLS.

AT last I was really in California. It was the valley of San Felipe. Californian-like, there was a flowing bar in the station, but of things to eat, not so much as a cracker, for the soldiers had eaten out everything. Going over the creek to the Indian village, I came first to a Diegeno squaw, whose numerous babies, scared by the Paleface, all ran and clutched her by the petticoat. Pointing to a basket of pan-cakes on the roof of the hut, then at a great heap of peaches, I made a significant gesture, gave her a silver quarter, and said, "*Sobez?*"

Then she said, "Ugh! ugh!"

Then I said "Ugh!"

Then she gave me a hatful of juicy peaches, and two pan-cakes, and seemed well content.

A wondrous valley was that of San Felipe, in that yellow month of September, as it stretched out between the sierras its long and sunny reaches, mile after mile, thickly clad as a sheep's back with the rich and odorous rowen. On this sweet-smelling couch, beneath a clump of whispering cottonwoods, I flung myself down for an afternoon of dreamy pencilings. Behind me lay Sahara; before me, the fabulous richness and ripeness of California in Autumn, to traverse which there still remained a golden remnant of days, which should be mine to enjoy, before the rainy season, without a freak of thunder or withering simoom.

And so I scribbled on and on across that dusty desert, and all those torments came back to me—torments—and then—and—dusty—the desert—my pencil dropped from my drowsy grasp, and I lay "face downward to the quiet grass," paying the unconscious best tribute of respect to the subtile resuscitations of California.

If any man understands the valley system of Southern California, it is a gift of Nature; let him not boast himself thereof above others. Most of the valleys appear to trend about N. W. by N. half N.; but if it isn't that way, it's some other way, which is just as good. What is certain is, that this lovely valley of San Felipe is swung down among the mountains like a huge hammock, one end being beautifully green in the Coast Range, the other a desert in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Another certain thing is, that a September morning in this valley is one of the finest possible in any climate, because, after sleeping with profound soundness, not enfeebled by any sultriness, you slowly warm out from the chill of a Swiss morning into the most exquisite of Italian forenoons, with its violet haze on the mountains.

Then, too, such is the admirable salubrity and attraction of this almost changeless climate, that, away in these dry days of September,

> "Smale fowles maken melodie, that slepen all the night with open yhe,"

as cheerily as in the East alone in April. Words cannot express the delight with which I listened to the sweet jangle of that never-to-be-forgotten morning, the first after the desert, the first really in California. That pretty scold with beak of gold, the magpie, was saying as snappishly as possible, "You shan't! you shan't!" Then there was the bluejay.

"Jaybird, jaybird, what'll you take for your tail?"

"Sixpence! sixpence!"

"Cut't off! cut't off!"

"Pay! pay!"

The strutting and important quail was always uttering his imperious family call "Come *right* home! come *right* home!" Once in a while the lonesome bachelor paysano chimed timidly in, "Ukle, ukle, ukle!" Then there was the melodious warble of the oriole, and the blue-bird, and the sweet small chirrup of the yellow-bird, with a song as wavy as its seesaw line of flight, and the crows, gabbling, and chuckling, and cawing.

If California has no mocking-bird, like that of the South, and no bobolink like that of New England, it has more than a compensation in its own variety of lark. Its song is more rapturous than the bobolink's, though almost as brief, but is irregular and wild, yet soft and wonderfully thrilling, and has none of the New England angularity of the bobolink's tune. It is the wild and resistless abandon of genius. But the lark is modest, and needs no arts of coquetry, no flitting and swinging on bushes, and flashing plumage—which it has not—to trick forth its peerless carol, as the bobolink does.

Then for the bass, there came up from afar the appalling and mighty blast of the donkey. There never was made on earth such another concentrated and double-breasted roar as some of those animals vented in the San Felipe valley. But, after all, say what you like, his music is incomparably more respectable than that of half the piano-players, because it is natural, and has at its foundation the root of all music that is worth hearing, this feeling, to wit: "I do but sing because I must." Besides that, his character is laudable; he is so thoroughly honest and sincere, and speaks his mind so freely.

Along the edge of the valley were the huts of the Diegenos, built of poles and flat-thatched with straw. All over and around them were mats and cloths of drying peaches, with their little cups of amber juice; baskets of pan-cakes on the roofs, etc. Inside, the converted braves, mighty to do nothing, endlessly chaffering and giggling, stretched themselves at ease on a collection of vegetables more motly than a booth of paschal eggs in Cologne. Heaps of red and yellow maize, melons, peaches, prickly pears, catclaw and mesquite pods, and pumpkins with their fat necks ridged with whelks.

I have spoken before of the inferiority of these Pacific tribes to the Eastern Indians. They were weaker in body, because the latter found plenty of good meat in their forests, while the Pacific tribes ate principally grasshoppers and grubs.

What tribes of Eastern Indians ever submitted to be named anew by the English? But the Jesuits called these after their missions, Diegenos, Miguelenos, etc., names which they keep to-day. But then there was something wonderfully magnetic about these old Spaniards, not found in Saxons. And when the "magnetism" failed, they pieced it out with the lazo. According to Kotzebue, La Perouse, and others, this was found a most potent spiritual weapon in subduing the carnal desires of the heathen to breathe God's pure air. The Indians had very wicked and profane "sweat houses," for keeping themselves healthy. The Jesuits immured them in religious dungeons, or in huts so outrageous that they burned them periodically to suppress the vermin.*

So I wandered on up the valley, between the brown-and-green-mottled mountains, spiked atop with pines, through the furzy luxuriance of the dappled prairie. Sprinkled in the grass were patches of dwarf sunflowers, here and there a milky morning-glory, and the white flowers of the jimson.

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*Kotsebue, as quoted by Dr. Stillman, says, "These dungeons are opened two or three times a day, but only to allow the prisoners to pass to and from the church. I have occasionally seen the poor girls rushing out eagerly to breathe the fresh air, and driven immediately into the church like a flock of sheep by an old ragged Spaniard armed with a stick." This was in 1824.

At the upper end of the valley there were groves of vast live-oaks, shutting out all the heavens. Lying at the base of one of their amazingly large trunks, close beside the bank, where "the babbling runnel crispeth," I fell asleep again, in this sunny weather, and was awakened by a good-sized spider which trotted across my face.

Here a rift in the leafy canopy suddenly reveals the mountains, now beetling close overhead. It is Italy! It is Italy! This splendid, shining, black-green oak is the ilex; up yonder the huge white bowlders stand out so wondrously cool and clean-looking in the Alpine green of the chamizal, just as in Italian Tyrol; and there, too, is the same delicious, dreamy haze. Verily it is Italy, for here is the house of Signor Tutti-Frutti, charmingly snug and neat in this land of slatternly habitations; and in his field the Italian "triple culture"—wheat between rows of apples and vines.

Just then a Diegeno, hideous in his army rags, came down the road on a beautiful Spanish pony, which was single-footed. As soon as he espied me, he started on a gallop, reeling in his saddle, and yelling like a demon. He rode straight at me, and stopped astonishingly short, just before the pony's head knocked against my head. He wanted tobacco, and evidently believed in the motto, "*Qui timide rogat, docet negare*," for he stretched out his hand, and grunted vigorously. Having none, I tried to get away, but I could by no means escape, for he managed the horse with such extraordinary dexterity and quickness that, turn what way I would, the animal confronted me face to face in an instant. It seemed to be a part of the rascal's body, and to move by his will. Such wheeling, running, turning, pursuing, overtaking and facing as were executed there for a moment, would have constituted a great attraction in a circus. I had to pick up a branch, and thwack him lustily and a good many times, before he would go away. Not Thersites himself could have made a face more kinked with disgust, fear, pleading, and craven supplication.

All one long afternoon I walked up, through the pass, then down among the great and quiet hills, through a solitude as deep and peaceful as the Truce of God. Even little Bunny himself, weaned two days ago, though play he must, jumped about and threw up his heels as softly as he could, so as not to waken his father.

On the great plain of Warner's Rancho I had an adventure that threatened to be pretty serious. There was a great herd of Spanish cattle at pasture, which seemed never to have seen a pedestrian, for they ran after me in multitudes, with their necks stretched up, and their eyes standing out, as if they had seen a ghost.

The first thing I know I am completely surrounded, and they are not by any means to be scared away. Really, this is rather alarming. They surge up toward me, despite all I can do, and their long and shining horns stand up around me like a forest. They snort, they sniff, they scrape the ground. And now the space around me is hardly a rod wide. Still the mighty mass crowds closer and closer together. As a last desperate resort I resolve, as soon as they come quite close, to leap, if possible, on one's back. The result certainly could not be worse than to remain on the ground.

But now, to my infinite relief, I see a Mexican galloping to the rescue. Hold! If he rushes on them, they will stampede over me, and death is certain. Ah! he understands that. He approaches slowly, he yells, he swings his arms. The attention of the brutes is drawn, and they cease crowding. They look at him, they begin to disperse, he rides to my side, I am saved!

Thanks! my friend, many thanks!

Seeing he was a common vaquero, I thought he would accept money, and offered him silver, but he refused it with a shake of the head, abstractedly. In the whole time he was with me, he did not open his lips, but continued to survey me with undisguised amazement. A footman appeared to be as strange an apparition to him as to the cattle.

Again I tramped on fifteen miles over another pass, nor heard a human voice. Neither was there one good splash of water over rocks, nor even a healthy chance of an accident, nor any other thing whatever, save an easy, endless roll of hills, clad in "this vivid incessant green" of chamizal.

Yet many of these hills were very beautiful in those soft September days. Away up on the mountains, where the gauzy haze in the morning frosted the brown and cuir-colored panicles of the chamizal, I have seen little sunny slopes glow with a warm and liquid flush of purple, delicious as any damson, or touch of Claude Lorraine.

Oak Grove describes itself, being a little wooded basin, beside the brook, among these unfading hills. Here I found a thoroughly representative Californian, of the class one degree higher than the average retired miner. He was lying in luxurious ease in an elegant hammock, beneath a vast oak tree, close beside the long ranks of bee-hives. He had plenty of novels and magazines scattered about, and, after a few words exchanged, I sat down and read an hour in a newspaper. In all that time he did not once even smile over his *Martin Chuzlewit.* Think of that! He was not above twenty-five, and seemed to be a sort of wonderful boy Beckford, with all his heart of laughter eaten out, listless, ineffably wearied and disgusted with everything on earth. At dinner he plumped a spoonful of squash on his plate in a kind of dissatisfied, dyspeptic way, as if he despised himself for being obliged to eat squash, or anything else, and thrust it mechanically and rapidly into his mouth, without vouchsafing a single word, though his two charming sisters were prattling gaily to him and to each other all the while.

There was plenty of silver on his table, and the daintiest of all possible linen, but his house was made of poles stuck into the ground, and daubed with mud, though it had a shingled roof. His fence was like unto himself. It was made of the crookedest stakes anybody can think of, set in a most unneighborly way, back to back, like a row of people bowing to each other, leaving a lot of holes, where the dogs popped nimbly through.

A trifling but amusing incident happened in this fence. A terrier and a cat were gnawing a bone in the road, and for some time appeared to dine together harmoniously. But at length some manner of contention sprung up, and they fell to quarreling. Pussy sat on her haunches for a moment, and clawed the dog's nose; but she was upset backward in a twinkling, and took to her heels. She ran through a chink which was too small for the terrier, but he was so furious that he did not observe that fact. His head went through, but his shoulders caught fast, and his hind parts flew up against the stick, where his tail snapped like a whip-lash.

From this pleasant grove and these sweet pastures of kine and of bees, again long miles downward, over this green and hilly wold. The clean white boulders everywhere stand up in the green thickets, trooping along the hillsides like walls, or perched in nests on the shoulders of hillocks, where they are the very counterpart of the white-walled villas which nestle around the fadeless shores of Lake Como.

And here on the San Luis Rey is another little cove, and a whitewashed German cottage. The vast live-oak, with the hives on the ground beneath, is the universal feature here. Add to this mighty pumpkins, great-bellied, tranquil cows, waddling home from the hillsides, willow-hedged gardens, and a wattled corral, full of all manner of fowls, every one vociferously talking in some dialect of German.

In descending from the tops of the Coast Range to the valley of the Margarita, nearly on a level with the Pacific, I crossed various belts of vegetation, which paled continually as I went lower. The mountains are everywhere greenest on top, then come brown and sepia tints, hazel, cuir, sage-color, and lastly the odious, dust-colored plain.

Cronise says the flowers of California are notably scentless. But this is not true, at least of the herbs which grow in these little brook valleys, for the very atmosphere is odorous as anise and fennel, and sweet as old nepenthe. Thrust your hand at random into the raggedest stems by the roadside, and pluck, and you shall have all the old delightful aromas of the garret, where mother used to go to get herbs for your youthful quinsies. The varieties of sage, mint, and rosemary are wonderful for their multitude. The mountain air, where in spring all sweet things bud with sap of green delights, in September is full of the music of bees and of dulcet medicines.

Begging the reader's pardon for its animal grossness, I will make the following observation. O the bread and butter that I have eaten in these hills, with the honey poured thereon, lucid, and long, and luscious! And the milk also.

California seems to be much like Greece in scenery and inspiration. It is a country something too theatrical. The glorious brilliance of late winter and spring is like an actor fired by the applause of his house; then comes the lassitude, the deadness of summer, when all the tendrils which bind the soul to Nature are wilted, and the poet is driven in upon his own imagination. It seems as if the ultimate literature of California would be, like that of Greece, rather subjective and introspective than interpretative of Nature. The Greeks believed themselves paying homage to Nature, but it was not the real; it was only the stage scenery, invented and peopled by their own exuberant fancies. They had no rivers but what rolled down flowers and gold; no forests but what were full of capering Dryads. They did not give themselves up to Nature, but, rather, invested everything with human attributes.

California may rear edifices of enchantment, like Moore's, perfumed all through with cinnamon and sandal wood; or dream the mystic pictures of a Longfellow; or yield some miracles of phrasing, like Tennyson; but she will hardly hear the noble organ-tones of a Bryant, or produce such an hierophant of Nature as Wordsworth. Burns says:

> 'The Muse nae Poet ever fand her,
> Till by himsel' he learned to wander
> Adown some trotting burn's meander,
> And no think lang."

The habitations both of native Californians and of Americans in these parts are the most forlorn that can be imagined. A mud-house all alone in the middle of a dusty looking plain, surrounded by various horse-sheds, corrals, styes, etc., but never a tree planted, nor any fence erected. There lived in Temecula a little bullet-headed American, whom I chanced to find several miles from his house, and thereupon, with the hospitality of his class, he offered me a ride, and when he found I could not accept, he positively insisted on hauling my little stuff. So I put it in—about three pounds in weight—and was not a little amused at the absurdity of the thing.

Arrived at his home, I found it such as I have described. He had been forty years in California, was married to a charming, little, round-faced, black-eyed Spanish woman, and was strongly Spanish in his sympathies. She was a great botanist, he told me, so I brought a large handful of sprigs along. She was in a peck of flutters over them, turned them this way and that, smelt them very daintily, chewed the leaves, pursed up her little mouth like a bottle-cork, whipped away every other minute to stir something in the pot, and—told me three-fourths of the names incorrectly.

In the morning we sat down to the everlasting bread and coffee of the native breakfast; strong coffee, without milk or sugar, and bread without butter. There were two brothers of the hostess present, men who spoke very correct Spanish, with a slight Asturian accent, and with the Gothic blue blood in their fine faces, which were almost white. But they were thoroughly Celtic in their gayety and in their merry laughter, wherein they appeared to great advantage beside my impassive countryman. He toiled hard after them with his laborious Spanish, but his tongue was very thick, compared with theirs, and his gestures very mechanical, and he smiled like a horse. In everything which he could control he had made himself as Spanish as he could.

From Temecula I passed up through a vast valley, or strip of plain, to La Laguna. The fading grass on the western line of its foothills had covered them as with Gobelin tapestries. The brightness of their colors passes all description.

The lake at the top of this valley is beautiful in itself as

Lake Lucerne, but it has mean settings. All the gorgeous calico foothills are snipped off, and leave the beautiful lake surrounded by dusty-red hills, which are glassed in its pale green rim. On one side were many large willows, and it was very curious to see some of them growing thriftily many rods out in the water.

There lived here a huge, corpulent Mexican, who was distinguished for saying nothing. He received me with a shake of the hand, a nod, and a pleasant smile. He went away, then presently returned, nudged me on the shoulder, and nodded his head up, to signify that I should follow. At the end of the veranda, whose floor was the ground, there was a little closet, and in it a counter, a shelf, and one lone bottle of whiskey. He poured out a thimbleful, and handed it to me without a word. Then he took some himself, looked at me, smiled, and said nothing. He had a shingled roof, an American plow and a harrow, and he seemed to think that, to sustain the dignity of these things, it was necessary he should "treat" with an American drink. In the twelve hours I was there he did not utter an audible word to his family.

In the evening I lay down on a dried ox-hide. The moon rose on the opposite side of the lake, and, shining down from the hills upon the water, suffused all the air with a pale pea-green radiance, as if the lake, as Catullus says of his beloved Benacus, had drunk down the daylight, and was giving it forth again, tinged with its own wonderful hues. Then somebody twitched my shoulder and said, "Senor, senor, get up to coffee."

A whole night had that mild-eyed thief purloined!

I will end this chapter with a visit to an old Californian, one of the "Forty-niners," as they call themselves, who has retired from mining, taken up a quarter section of land, and gone to "ranching." He may stay on this farm ten years; he will probably stay on it ten months, then sell it at four dollars an acre, "and the improvements at a valuation." It shall be in Temescal Canyon, which is a deep, narrow valley among green mountains.

He has one little field, half hedged with willows, half fenced with poles, which is full of maize, dried so rigidly stiff that it hangs down its blades like swords, and hardly flickers at all in the wind, though its three, four, five ears stand stoutly up on every stalk. A little irrigating ditch runs along the roadside a mile, and creeps through the willow hedge. A great sycamore stands over his cabin, and is, in these days, sadly letting go leaf after leaf to rock and wheel in many a melancholy circle to the ground. There is no fence about his house; no shrubbery; nothing but the forlorn wood-yard in front, with a few gnarly billets of oak, which he and his Mexican wife have pecked at a hundred times in the vain attempt to split, to the great peril of her bare toes, and a rusty ax half buried in the chips; and in the rear of the house jungles of sunflowers, all ripped and twisted by the pestered cattle.

The whole valley is now utterly parched and dry, ragged with flaunting skeletons of gigantic weeds and mustard, odiously dusty, with nothing green to look upon, except the tops of the mountains, and the live oaks here and there, which look so strangely and darkly lustrous amid this hideousness.

All around his house, within five rods of it, and everywhere in the valley where there is a piece of ground as wide as your hat, a ground squirrel has his hole and his little mound. The whole earth is honey-combed by them. Whenever I approach an oak, they hustle and tumble out of it in myriads, with their cheeks full of acorns, and the ground swarms with them, as with rats.

He has shingles on his adobe hut, and that is a great deal in this country. Underneath these shingles—for we can look right up to them—we sit between the cool, bare mud-walls, on some stools. Peter Quartz is his name; an oldish man, with a long face, and exceedingly round-shouldered, from sitting so much in camps without a chair. He wears his hat in the house. After some circumlocution, he begins the story of his California mining experiences.

"I come to Californy from Pike County in old Missouri, in '49. When I got to the Timber Toes Diggins, I hadn't nary cent left. The first night I hadn't no blanket and no tent, and my har froze fast in the mud, and in the mornin' I jumped up sorter quick, and jerked out a handful of har.

"I went to work in them diggings first fur another man, at ten dollars a day, an' found. I worked hard all winter, and lived on promissory beef and knuckle grease; and in the spring it all fizzled plumb out, and I never got nary cent of my wages.

"Howsomedever, I had my pick, shovel, and pan left, so I went sluicin' up to Catnip Creek. In eight months I had my stake made; nigh onto $7,000 clean dust. 'Well,' says I to myself, says I, 'now you'd better just cut tracks, Pete Quartz, and leave hyur, while you've got the robin by the tail, least it slips away, and you never gits a chance to put salt onto't again.' But I see a feller, just the night I was packin' up fur to leave, as had a mighty smart chance of maps, and a claim, which he said was a payin' one thousand dollars a week clur. He had to hurry home to his dyin' mother, he said, and he offered, seein' it was me, an' he had to sacrifice everythin', to take my pile fur it, though he vowed 'twas worth ten thousand dollars clur. I paid him the pile, kinder pityin' him like, but thinkin to myself 'twas a good trade, and went to work, and in four weeks it busted the riffle onto me agin. 'Twasn't worth nothin', and the feller knowed it.

"But I hed a shanty and a lot of grub left, and I traded them fur a mule, aimin' fur to go up to Hard Scrabble Gulch, whar I heerd thar was a right smart lay-out. But that very night the cussed, wall-eyed mule fell down a gulch, and broke its neck.

Then I started fur to walk thar, 'long with Jake Cumaway. Jake was mighty down-hearted 'bout his children he hed left, and he jest poked along all the time behind me, with his head in the dust. Says I, 'Jake, don't crawl along behind me like a dog all the time, but come up hyur 'longside, and hold up yer head like a man. But he paid no 'tention, and kept pokin' along in the dust. He was clean broke down, thinkin' 'bout his children; and one night, when we laid rolled up together, I heerd Jake moan, and I shuk him, but he never answered me agin. 'Pears like 'twas the gloomiest night I ever see, settin' up thar alone with Jake, in them dismal roarin' pines. In the mornin' soon as 'twas light, and I felt safe like, I jest broke clean down, and wanted to lay down and die. But I dug a hole in the sand, and give poor Jake the best buryin' I could.

"I seed Jake's little children, when I had made a stake agin, and I gin 'em enough, and put it in bank, fur to keep 'em till they was of age.

"After Jake died, I hedn't no heart to do nothin' fur nigh about a year. Last I went to figgerin' roun' agin, workin' day's-works, and got me a hoss, fur to go up to Idaho. I traded him fur a claim up thar, worked it ten days, and didn't strike nothin', and then sole it for a month's grub. In less than a week the fellar that bought it struck pay-dirt, and sole out fur $17,000!

"I eat up all my grub, prospectin' round, doin' nothin'; then I set out agin, and footed it back to Californy. Thar I fell in with Bill Migler, an ole friend of mine.

"We was clean down to the bottom, an' flat on our backs. We had to patch our pantaloons with these self-risin' flour-sacks, that makes the people over in Utah call the Californians 'self-risers;' and Bill an' me hed only three shirts betwixt us, but we kept the odd one clean, so we could wash and change once in a while. After a spell me and him tuk up a claim, and that summer we tuk out $23,000 apiece.

"I was a gettin' mighty tired of prospectin' about and livin' hard; so I jest bought fourteen sheers in the Consolidated Toukaway Quartz Crushing Company, and then sot into the hotel, and picked my teeth as large as life. But things went agin me, as usual, and in four months the Consolidated Toukaway went clean up the spout. Then I jest throwed up, and come down hyur, plumb disgusted, and poorer than I was when I begun, for now I've lost *all* my har, with worritin' and frettin'.

"But I kinder hanker all the time to go back agin, and I would ef I wasn't mahried. Them miners was the best men I ever see, anyhow. Many's the time I've seed a po' fellar, with a woolen shirt onto him, asked in and got a good square meal give to him; but the feller with a biled shirt, he was let go along. A feller with his breeches patched with flour-sacks, he was *never* turned away."

There is a story told by Californians which is illustrative of early mining times. It is said that a certain preacher found his way to a mining camp, and began to labor for the salvation of immortal souls. But mammon, women, wine, and gaming held control over the minds of men in those wicked parts, and the unfortunate minister not only failed to reap any spiritual harvest of his labors, but carnal things also began soon to be sadly lacking. In short he got entirely out of money. Then the miners, with true Californian generosity, made him up a purse of $600, to enable him to reach some more favorable region.

But, alas! for human nature, the unfortunate minister had departed from the ways that are right, through the force of bad example, and in an evil hour he yielded to the seductions of the monte bank, and staked his money. As a matter of course, in about an hour and a half, he saw the last dollar of it slide from his hands. At this stage of the procedings, the heart of the monte-dealer relented within him. He proposed to the unhappy man of God that he should offer up prayers in his behalf, to the value of $600. He consented, a bargain was forthwith struck, the first installment of the money was promptly deposited, and the minister engaged in prayer. Not more earnestly and eloquently did Parson Sampson wrestle before the throne of grace, when he was in the presence of the Countess Yarmouth-Walmoden, who, he hoped, would procure him a benefice from the king. In fine, the prayer was so protracted, earnest, and, doubtless, so thoroughly repentant, that the monte-dealer said he would consider it an equivalent for the entire sum, which he at once turned over to the contrite minister.

CHAPTER XX.

WINE IN DRY VALLEYS.

YOU may journey seven hundred miles west of the Mississippi, across the majestic rivers of Louisiana and Texas, and still the people, when they speak of "the river," mean the Father of Waters. So in California, in regard to the Colorado. The Santa Ana is the largest of all the streams of Southern California, but it is only a few inches of water, spread evenly over an eighth of a mile of sand—shining like a girdle of silver in a weary land.

After crossing this river, and entering upon the vast Chino plains, the traveler sees an amusing spectacle. The dust-colored earth is covered with the tiny mounds of the ground squirrel. This animal is gray, about the size of the Eastern tree-squirrel, and has a long bush. He forms a partnership with a little owl, smaller than that which thrusts himself on the prairie-dog, will-he, nill-he, and with far more honorable ideas of business transactions. You can often see one standing sentry at a hole, while the squirrel roams far abroad, foraging; now scudding through the vast white brakes of the dead mustard, with his tail whipping among the stalks; now backing along, drawing after him with his fore paws one of the little yellow gourds of the calabacilla; now sitting pertly up on his haunches, with a clover-burr in his hands, nibbling it with such bewitching cunning in his countenance.

This owl can see well in daylight, but he does not sound the alarm till you approach pretty near. Then away whips little Bunny, carrying his tail along, for the most part on a horizontal; but every rod or so it flies up straight, and he is certain to erect it with a gay flourish just as he dives into his hole.

Sometimes the owl stands by, and superintends the labor of digging. The squirrel works away, scraping and dredging out his hole, backing up and hauling up the earth with his fore-paws; then he stands erect, and flings it out in a constant shower between his hind-legs. The owl looks on approvingly, and sustains him in the arduous labor by the smiles of his countenance. Once in a while he stoops, and brings his gizzard, or his crop ra[illegible]er, clear down to the ground, as if to take in a very long breath; then he straightens up quick, with a sharp screech, "Go it!"

These squirrels are the pest of farms. They eat up everything. The farmer has to surround his barley-fields with a cordon of strychnine-pots, or he gets no good of his labor.

What myriads of blackbirds circle and sweep in the dusty fields, or perch in the little willows by the tules. I think our common blackbird is the most thoroughly representative American bird we have; he is so practical, so straight-forward, so business-like, so intent upon the "main chance." It has a better right to fly over the armies and navies of the Republic than the ravenous thief which now perches there. What does the eagle know of purchase or of peaceable annexation? It has served every nation of robbers and plunderers of provinces, from Rome down to Austria, and flaunts itself to-day at the head of modern European Chauvinism, and has its image stamped on that assassin of liberty, the needle-gun. The flight and the robberies of the eagle are almost world-wide, and such did Rome and Austria seek to make their empires. But let us, for the boundaries of our commercial Republic—for we are neither the Romans, nor yet the Greeks of the modern world, but the Phenicians—take the practical blackbird for our guide. He does not fly widely over Mexico, but likes Canada pretty well. It might be well, perhaps, for single races of men to spread themselves no wider across the track of the sun than do the races of birds, for with the sun runs the course of strong and homogeneous empire.

One night I staid with a Mexican, who had a great heap of maize ears beside his house, and several Indians husking it. In the night they slept on the husks, in a kind of shed under my window, and one of them was taken violently ill, and about daybreak he died. It was one of the saddest sights I ever witnessed. Converted from the faith of his ancestors, he was not well-grounded in the new religion, and in his dying agony he seemed to doubt them both, and gather consolation from neither. In the anguish of his uncertainty and of his delirium, he continually tossed from side to side, and moaned, "*Ay, Dios mio!*" "*Ay, Senor sacramental!*" "*Ay, Dios mio!*" and then again he would mutter something in his native tongue. All night long his piteous wailing came up; but toward morning it grew rapidly feebler, and, as I looked out of my window at the first streak of dawn, I saw his comrades, in the feeble light of the shed, bending over him in stricken silence.

In the upper part of the Chino plains there were some of those wonderfully brilliant foothills of Southern California, which well-nigh drive me to despair when I attempt a description.

"Nature dies hard in California. She does not linger in the hectic beauty of an Eastern autumn, but fights, inch by inch, as she withers upward, in the long, dry summer, retreating from the plain to the foothills." In that great ebb and flow of colors which distinguishes California above most other countries, the green of the mountains settles down over all the land, like a heaven of clouds, in November; but in May the color begins to desert the plains, and leaves them utterly odious, but changes in the foothills, like a dying dolphin, into more splendors than can be described.

It is a strange, foreign-looking region, is this valley of the San Jose. You can see no mountains; nothing but the treeless valley, of vast extent, bounded by round, burly knolls. Here and there one has a bright dwarf-walnut on its slope, or covers its head with a patch of cactus, which, at a distance, looks like a green velvet skull-cap on the crown of some old Franciscan friar.

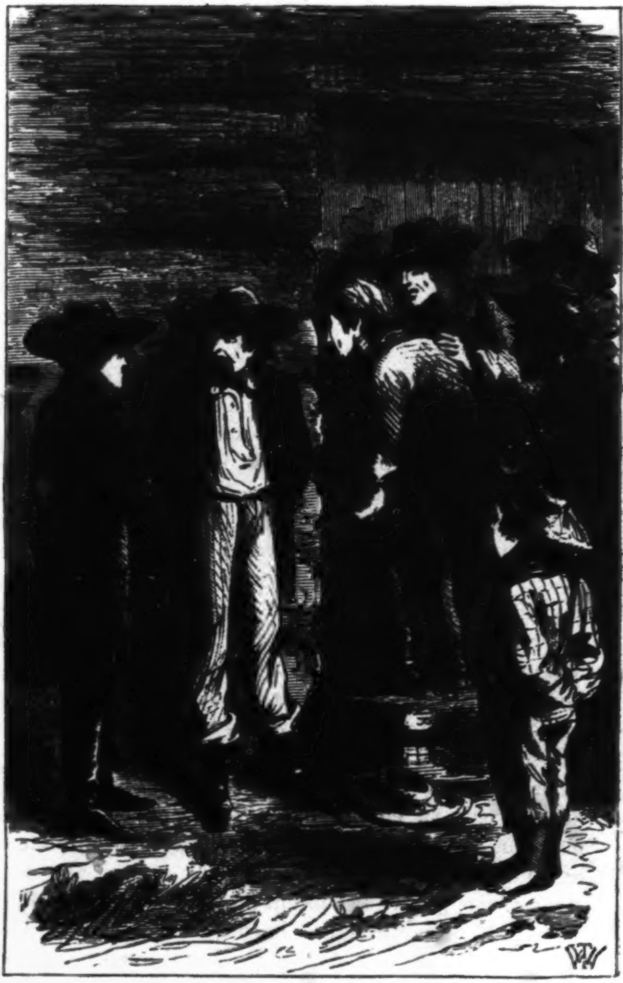
What a world of fatness yearly runs to waste in this almost fathomless brown adobe! The vine roots penetrate it eighteen feet, and even at that depth are surfeited and palled with richness. A farmer showed me a well, twenty-six feet deep, to the very bottom of which a peach-tree, of only six years growth, had already sent a tap-root as large as one's thumb!

California has not the slightest material for an Indian summer, as Hawthorne describes it, with "its pensive glory in the far golden gleams among the long shadows of the trees." But this tender lilac haze is its tropical equivalent, and breathes over the land an influence, not dreamy, tranquil and pensive, like that beautiful summer of our East, but has in it a suggestiveness of Grecian genius, as it were an exquisitely tender and subtle spirit of earth, which gave breath to the old autochthones. When her gorgeous summer slowly fades into nothingness, and the beauty of California turns to the hideous pallor of death, there seems yet to linger over her face an aureola, like the soul of a dying saint, or some sweet breath of resignation, which makes those sunken features still dearer to the beholders. And in the years of her anguish and trembling, as in 1868, this presence is still more plainly felt, as if California piteously pleaded with her children for sympathy.

On this great plain, brown-colored with the thick carpeting of dead clover, droves of horses, sleek, and glossy, and round, roam up and down, and gather the clover-burrs. At the unwonted sight of a footman, they scour away, with heads and tails gayly aloft, stop at a distance and reconnoiter, and snort, and prance, bending their limber legs so lighty that they seem to bounce on a spring mattrass. Ha! the colts, how they caper and frolic, and stand up on their hind legs, fencing and cuffing each other! They could turn somersaults on this soft bed, like country boys in a hay-mow, and never crack their necks.

Near El Monte I passed a house, in front of which there were thirteen horses tied to the rack. I went in to get a drink, and saw so great a solemnity upon the visages, that I thought there must be a funeral in progress. But when I asked the boy, he told me, with much giggling and ducking of his head into his shoulders, that they were all courting his sister Roxy. Then I became amused, and, prowling about the crack of the door, contrived to get a glimpse of the lady. She was a Texan girl, with one of those snow-white puffy faces, which look as if they would collapse if kissed ardently, but which, when they marry and leave off their silly skittishness, soon wrinkle, and often develop an energy like a tiger's, upon occasions. She sat in one of the two rooms of the house, with one of her suitors.

One of the "outs" was intent on the crack of the door. He would squint through at her with one eye, then with the other. Then he would try to look through with both



ROXY'S SUITORS.

eyes at once, dodging backward and forward, and looking ludicrously cross-eyed. At last a happy thought struck him. He bent his head to one side, aligned his two eyes with the crack, and got such an overwhelming impression of her charms that he sighed deeply, and dropped a tear from one of his eyes. Then another pulled him away, and looked in. They all waited patiently for their turns at the crack, and I took mine also.

"Are you a settler in these parts, stranger?" asked one, after he had surveyed me from head to foot.

"No; but I intend to take up a quarter-section."

"Well, sir, 'less you're pre-empted already, you haint got no right to look through that 'ar crack, interruptin' actual settlers."

Poor fellow! he viewed with great disfavor the prospect of his thirteenth chance being reduced to a fourteenth.

In autumn El Monte is an oasis in the mighty desert of dead clover. There was a little circle of farms around it, creeping timidly out upon the plain, and I seemed to be, after so many hundreds of miles in semi-barbarism, once more in a scene of civilized life, with,

> "Alle manere of men, the mene and the riche,
> Werchynge and wandrynge;"

but chiefly wandering. I was surprised at the number of lusty tramps whom I met, moping doggedly along in the road, with a roll of blankets on their shoulders. They always had one and the same story to tell, which I listened to at first for information, but I soon grew weary of it.

But now at last I approached the great goal of my desires—Los Angeles. As I stood upon the San Gabriel terrace, the steeples and tops of the little city barely loomed above the orchards; and not all the fabulous glories and the gardens of Damascus, "Pearl of the East," could have been sweeter to the eyes of Mohammed, just emerging from the desert, than were those of the river and city of the Angels to mine.

First, before I plunge *in medias res*, I am going to give a brief description of the surroundings; and then, if, in that week I spent with Jim, among all the dips and dives we made into the gardens, the orchards the wine-vaults, and the other tropical glories, we wander out at times into daylight and a state of consciousness, I will chronicle the circumstances, and the impressions received.

The valley of the Los Angeles proper is scarcely more than half a mile in width, and meanders down from the Santa Susana mountains, hazy and dim thirty miles away, through a plain which is shivered into knobs. Sahara itself could not be more a desert in October, and not on earth could a streak of orange groves and vineyards shine more brilliantly green adown the middle.

I entered the city near the little, old, mean, Spanish quarter, with its red-tiled adobes, and straightway fled out of it to avoid the horrible dust. I wist not where to go. I strolled down little alleys, fenced with gigantic canes, or with willows which hid the heavens, or with queer, old, Spanish hedges of cactus; through gates left in Eden-like simplicity unguarded; across frowsy gardens, where all manner of weeds twisted themselves in their riotous rankness, and castor-oil plants shook out their leaves in every hedge-row; and through orchards, whose yellow and fragrant fruits of every variety that grows above the tropics, smirked upon green boughs, or wasted their quality in the rank and tangled grass.

At last I got somewhere,—I don't know where it was—and found plenty of pears under a tree, of which the owner invited me to partake. We ate them under the tree, where they should be eaten, and not amid the cold glitter of silver knives and clink of dessert plates. After living for five months on bread and beef I could only eat one, it was so big, so pulpy and so luscious.

In company with Jim, I visited one of the wine cellars of Los Angeles. We wandered about through a cavernous gloom, along mouldering alleys brooded over by eternal solitude, among the tuns, whose huge circumference, in the light of the candle, smiled at us a solemn smile, and dapper barrels atop, whose little cheeks were full of smirks and grimaces.

Clink! A bottle bursting on the rack, in its swelling rage spits the shards across the alley. Here and there a hoary cobweb streamer, like the beard of some ancient monk at prayer, swayed with a gentle motion as we passed, as if muttering at our intrusion; and the light of the candle glistened on spots of dampness, which seemed to be great eyes, glowering at us wrathfully from the walls.

When we returned to the pleasant light of day, there stood a row of bumpers, beaming in moist expectancy.

"Quem Venus arbitrum
Dicet bibendi?"

Who brings the myrtle, and the chaplets of celery, and the roast peacock? Where are the conchs of perfumes, and the vases of roses around the room, and the cool vermilion frescoes? Where the reclining guests, whose flowing locks glisten with Syrian unguents? Where the fountain, and the splendid lilies, out in the court?

But we have here no longer immortal Fabruian, or common Sabine. Bring Angelica, the golden liquor, and silvery Paderon Blanco, and rosy Cocomango, and Sonoma's sunny wine, and sweet juice of Anaheim!

Which will you take? Angelica or Sonoma? The Sonoma has a false and delusive sparkle, as it lies there in its crisp and tender pallor; and as you lift it before you, within the frosted rim, a cool and delicious shiver creeps around your heart-strings; but Angelica flows with an indescribably smooth, creamy and mellifluous mellowness, which, beginning about the porches of your intellect, pours down through all your marrow a serene mesmerism of peace. The former is an icy and heartless blonde, brilliant, fragile, sweetly tremulous in her ethereal beauty; but Angelica is your ripe beauty of the South, with her soft "brown hair just lighted with gold," through whose languishing eyes you can look into a soul full of all gracious tenderness. You choose the latter. It is well. Leave the Sonoma to boys, and to eaters of cheese and mustard; Angelica is for finer souls.

To California;—land of golden sunsets, of golden hills, and of golden mines; land of the ardent dreams of our youth, and of the perfection of our American manhood;—we drink this golden wine.

If anything unusual happened in Los Angeles while I was there, I am not aware thereof. Indeed, I am not certain whether I staid a week, or two weeks. All the people are such nice people, so frank, so free, so generous, and all the while riding up and down in gorgeous buggies, bowing and smiling. You can buy lots on every street corner for nothing, and sell them for never so much money and get rich in an hour, or—the other thing. Everybody is so glad to see you, and jumps over the counter to shake hands, and wants to sell you some lots.

It is true, there is a great deal of dust in the streets; but that helps to suppress the flies. The flies are very numerous in the restaurants—very numerous indeed; but then you can keep them out of your wine by drinking it. The waiter with the very imposing mustache, and hair parted in the middle, sitting in his shirt-sleeves and slippers with his feet high above his head on the counter, may wait on you, or may not; but you can help yourself. There are some rows of low dens, with continuous awnings all along, Southern fashion, filled with Mexicans, and with Ah See, Hop Lee, Sum Bung and Jim Long; but they turn out pretty clean shirts. There is a huge kettle of pitch boiling on every other street corner, the stench of which is only a little worse than that on the roofs; but this also assists in suppressing the flies.

When I arrived in Los Angeles, I had just one silver dollar left. At the earliest hour of business I hastened to the office of Wells, Fargo & Co., where I expected to find a check. Inside the railing there was a keen-eyed, thin-faced, little clerk, with his remarkably small hat set a little on one side of his head.

"Have you a letter for Socrates Hyacinth?"

He looked the letters over in a manner which seemed to me most unnecessarily and provokingly leisurely, put them back, turned round, plucked out one of his eyelashes and looked at it, and then said, in a perfunctory tone:

"Nothing."

I stood transfixed and dumb. Confound the man! I gave him such explicit directions, and now there is nothing for it but to go and hire myself to a farmer. After a few moments I started with the utmost reluctance to go away, but lingered along, and dropped some fragmentary remark which indicated, I fear, a very sanguinary disgust.

"There is one for *Solymus* Hyacinth," he said, casting his eyes languidly toward me, as he turned over his ledger.

"Solymus Hyacinth! There it is again! The identical blunder they made once before," I said, impulsively and somewhat disconnectedly. I then named the firm from whom the draft should come, whereupon he raised his eyebrows very high. He walked to the box, took out the letter, looked at it again, raised his eyebrows higher than before, but said nothing, then came and sat down to his ledger. Then I explained to him at considerable length, and very earnestly, the whole affair, how the money was earned, by whom sent, etc. He was manifestly becoming interested in my case, told me the letter was from the firm named, and admitted it was quite a hardship. But such was the iron inflexibility of the rules they were obliged to observe, he could do nothing. Finally he asked me to come again in an hour, when there would be present a gentleman acquainted with the parties sending the draft.

It would be a long history to relate all the circumlocutions and tuggings at the red tape by which I finally got possession of that needed draft. Suffice it to say, I returned in an hour, was closely questioned, and at last allowed to open the letter of advice. Then, after much higgling and chaffering, and by affixing my name to a statement of facts, I obtained the draft.

The prettiest things in Los Angeles are the prinientas, with their dainty fringe-like foliage, and their scarlet pods. Then there is an occasional fan-palm, with its immense vanes, broad enough for fans in Brobdingnag; and the lofty date-palm, with its thatched trunk looking like the side of a Suabian peasant's hut, and hoisting out aloft its crest of yellow-stemmed leaves, like gigantic ostrich plumes.

In regard to California wines, I have space for only a few general remarks. It is admitted by a Hungarian, probably the largest wine-grower in the State, that Americans are already the best vineyardists in California. They are not only more intelligent and scientific than the great body of French and Hungarian peasants, but they are more careful in growing and preparing the grapes, and more cleanly in their processes of manufacture. The best winemakers prefer to buy their supply of juice from Americans. Then, too, European methods were found not to be adapted to California in many instances, and Americans were more ingenious in suiting themselves to new conditions than were men who had grown up amid Old World traditions. Americans often acquired the whole art and mystery of making good wine before these disciples of routine could get out of their European grooves. Among other particulars wherein wine-making in California differs from that of France may be mentioned the fact that, owing to the dry, warm climate of this State, especially in Los Angeles, the concern of the vineyardist is to prevent the grapes from getting too ripe, and therefore too strong in alcohol, while in Europe the difficulty is to get the berries ripe enough.

The average California wine, in its pure state, contains about twelve per cent of alcohol, and to the American taste, educated on whisky, this is not enough. Hence even the most reputable manufacturers add to Angelica and Los Angeles Port, which are very sweet wines, a sufficient quantity of pure grape brandy, made by themselves, to increase the percentage of alcohol to about seventeen. This is not necessary in order to enable these wines to keep, but to overcome the excessive sweetness which, to the American palate, is insipid. In Los Angeles the grapes sometimes parboil slightly on one side, and thus become sugary; but the most experienced vineyardists remedy this to some extent by irrigating with cold mountain water, keeping back the growth of the vines in the spring.

But, if the Californian is slightly at a disadvantage in regard of the sweeter wines, he is able to distance the European with his light table wines, in that his generous and cloudless sunshine imparts to them sufficient body without the addition of any of those pernicious decoctions smuggled in by Europeans. Indeed, grape-juice is so abundant and so excellent that the price at which wine sells would not justify the expense of sugar and spirit. The light wines of California are probably the purest in the world, though the vineyardists must not assume too much credit for that fact, inasmuch as their pecuniary interest at present forbids adulteration.

There are many Frenchmen and Italians in Los Angeles and their example has been contagious. One must be surprised to observe the number of Americans who drink wine regularly at dinner. A saloon keeper of long experience told me that, in ten years, the consumption of whisky had very sensibly decreased, while that of wine and grape-brandy had increased. The result was, a decrease of drunkenness.

The oranges of Los Angeles are the best in the world, with one exception. In Matamoras, Mexico, the oranges brought to market, though small, are sweeter than these.

Most of the apples are nearly worthless. They are vapid and insipid. The grafted varieties of pears grow to an almost fabulous size, and are very good.

* * * * * *

And so at last I tore myself away from beautiful Los Angeles, and went on my journey. While in the city I bought a new coat, and I had not gone five miles before I met a man who wanted to sell me a rancho. Before that, while I had the old coat, everybody wanted to hire me to work. Thought I to myself, when I reach San Francisco, I will purchase an elegant pair of shoes, and then somebody will want to lend me some money. Said the man to me—he was a fine-looking man, with the universal, Californian, brown beard, and mounted on a saddle with bear-skin housings—said he,

"Perhaps you may be looking for Government land, my friend?"

"No, sir; if you had the swiftest horse in Los Angeles, you could not ride fast enough to put any Government land into my pocket."

"All right, sir. No offence meant. There are so many people on that errand nowadays."

Let the reader understand that it is a heinous offence in Southern California to ask a knowing one if he is looking for that description of land, for the reason that so many slouching fellows make that pretense, while they are really squatters or "coyotes." As soon as this man saw I understood the situation, and used the common phrase of the country in repelling the insinuation, he apologized as above, and then offered me some of his own land, and then chaffered a long time trying to sell me a horse. This was the only offer of land I received, but the new coat brought me many proffers of horses. The intolerable nuisance of Southern California is, that everybody either wants to hire you, or sell you something.

On the vast mustard plains which stretch from Los Angeles to the sea there is nothing to break the glaring white monotony, except here and there a patch of cactus, overrun with wild gourds. In places this wide waste is of a dusty or coffee-green, with the little poleo. You may meet a scarecrow Mexican, with his rags fluttering in the breeze, and his wolfish dog between his legs, as he sits by the roadside. He has a thousand sheep, but you cannot see one, though you can hear the multitudinous surging and crackling in the mustard. What on earth do the sheep eat here? Seeds, nothing but seeds. Yet they are lusty fat fellows.

I went out to an appointed rendezvous in the Santa Susana Mountains, where I found Jim, and a veteran whom he had brought for a bear-hunt.

Early next morning we started into the mountains.

Reed advised me to carry a shot-gun, for he said with a rifle I would probably only wound the bear, but with a shot-gun I might, at short range, blind him and do some good. We went out along the foot of the range, waiting for the dense ocean fog to lift. At first Reed chatted glibly, but presently he began to be silent and look about him, and Jim and I naturally began to imitate his manner. We stretched out our necks, and gazed about like turkeys when it is time to go to roost, looking up into the hills with a very knowing air, and screwing our faces into the ravines as if we saw something. We stumbled over a great many bushes, but Reed glided noiselessly among them, without looking down.

The mountains here are much like a shed-roof in shape. There is a mighty canyon in the slope, with steep sandstone walls, and thickets at the bottom which Reed said the grizzlies haunted, making their dens in caves in the bottom of the wall. We approached, stepped out upon the edge, and peered anxiously down into the yawning and awful solitude.

Nothing moving.

Reed said they had probably returned already from the plains, whither they resort early in the morning to gather prickly-pears, and we should not see them astir again till evening. So we spent the day in hunting deer, wandering about by wild and fearful ways, through savage gorges, and among stupendous bowlders.

Reed soon brought down a pricket, and we roasted some choice cuts with sticks, and ate them with wild honey—Californian squatter fare. The hunter showed us a steep wall, in which the bees had deposited honey in a great cavity thirty feet from the ground, and, for lack of room, plastered on the outside wall a sweet bushel of juice. They placed it in the holes in the trees, and rocky caves, and every wooded ravine smelled sweet with the dripping nectar. Was Virgil predicting California when he says that, in the new golden age,

"Et duræ quercus sudabunt roscida mella?"

That evening and the next morning we visited the great canyon in vain. Again we spent the day in a desultory manner, and another morning we were disappointed.

Then we went to a deep ravine, where Reed thought they might possibly be out yet, eating acorns. He walked slowly down one side of the ravine, and we on the other, concealed from him by the trees. Suddenly we saw an enormous "meal-nose," sitting erect on his haunches, nearly eight feet high, a few rods in advance. He had evidently heard Reed, and not us, for he was sniffing the air in that direction.

Presently he rubbed one nostril with one paw, and the other with the other, as if to improve, his scent. Jim and I stood motionless for a few moments, but our hearts kept up a lively thumping. Presently Jim whispered:—

"The bloody old humbug! I'll put a button-hole in his jacket. If his shoulder was only turned this way a little."

"Don't try it, Jim!" I whispered. "You might only wound him, and then he'd make us into mince-meat."

In that moment of suspense and grave-like stillness we heard the click of Reed's rifle, and we knew that long black barrel was leveled somewhere, and not in vain. A sharp crack leaped among the rocks, followed by a moan, while Jim fired wildly after him.

Heavens! he has shot another bear, and this one is upon him before he can reload!

"Load for your life, Reed; load for your life! There is another," cried Jim.

"Mount your tree! mount your tree!" came back the gruff response.

With incredible quickness he rammed home his balls, slung out the rammer, while the bear was examining his mate, and fired without aiming, as the brute rushed upon him. He only wounded him in the paw. He jumped into a small live-oak, followed by the grizzly, which clutched his boot. A ball from Reed's revolver ripped a long scratch in his face, though it did him no great injury. But he tumbled down all in a heap, dragging off the boot, ran to his mate, turned her over with his unhurt foot, and uttered an appalling cry of rage and distress. Again he plunged into the tree, where he could almost reach the hunter, and again a glancing shot hurled him back, and again he ran to his mate, turned her over and wailed.

Thus he ran backward and forward. The fourth shot pierced his windpipe. He ran and lay down beside his mate, breathing with a gurgling sound. Reed slipped down, loaded his rifle, took deliberate aim, and sent a ball crashing through his head.

But even then, such is the tenacity of the animal, he continued to moan and to struggle. And thus together they lay, those fiercest brutes we know, and yet so constant in their death.

A NIGHT WITH THE SHEPHERDS.

CHAPTER XXI.

COAST-WALKS.

NEAR Las Pasitas, I stopped one afternoon at an adobe hut, the sole house on an immense, wealthy rancho. It might have been a bandit den, it was so hideously naked and desolate. In the middle of a great desert plain; nothing around it but the sheep-corrals; the ground all strewn with bones and woolly skeletons; no windows in the dead, bleak walls; no beds, no carpets, no chairs; nothing but rolls of blankets, sheepskins, billets of wood, guns and pistols, smashed hats, boots and mildewed ponchos, scattered over the earthen floor, which was ground to powder and never swept. There were blotches of blood on the walls, as if a sheep's head had been flung against them, and long stains, where the hot jets might have spirted from some murdered man; the corners were full from top to bottom with many-storied webs, where fat, old, lazy spiders drowsed the livelong day, sniffing the dark odors of murder, which never for a moment were cleansed by the blessed beams of the sun.

The house was built in the usual native fashion, with three rooms in a row, no doors between them, and no windows. In one end slept the proprietor, in the middle the shepherds, and the other end was a black and grimy kitchen.

It was dark when the shepherds came in, and there was nothing cooked. They killed a sheep in the cruel Spanish fashion. They hung it up right before the door, and cut its throat; stripped off the pelt; tore out some ribs; burned them black on the fire; then gnawed them like wolves.

One of them was an American, but spoke Spanish better than English. He had the most brutally savage face I ever saw, and as we sat around the fire on the ground, and I looked upon them, lighted by the ruddy glare, tearing the bloody ribs in their teeth, I shuddered for my safety. But the proprietor spread some sheepskins in his room, and then a roll of gorgeous, many-colored blankets, as if he were some luxurious brigand, rolling them out for his captive; and I got what sleep I could from them. In the morning I was thoroughly ashamed, for he was very kind, gave me half of his pocket of peaches, chatted glibly, and bowed when I left with the courtliness of an old Castilian grandee.

The thing which one notices here is the manner in which the Americans have undermined the natives, and set them loose, by marrying their women away from them. The Californian girl seems to say, with Jessica,

> "A daughter to his blood,
> I am not to his manners."

She likes the American better, perhaps not for any qualities of heart, but because he is a better average bread-winner. And it is not these Yahoos alone who find themselves without wives, for the best old Spanish blood goes a begging. But as soon as the capture is effected, the Californian wife begins another kind of conquest. She soon reduces her husband to bread and coffee for breakfast, always compels him to speak Spanish with her, and teaches their children only Spanish. They learn English later, but seldom speak it with correctness. These children are often remarkably pretty, being handsomer than pure American children, but, so far as I have observed, they inherit more of the Californian idleness and love of silly ostentation than they do of American energy.

The native Californians have a reputation for lavish hospitality, but they are outliving it bravely. My host in Temecula said to me, regretfully:—

"Thirty years ago you could ride anywhere in the country, and at any rancho exchange your horse for a fresh one. But that is no longer possible. The Californians are becoming selfish, gold-hunting, business men, like us Americans."

At the conclusion of a "private party" which was given by a respectable Spanish family about the time I was passing, the host amazed the guests by collecting two dollars from every gentleman. But then the Spanish have many queer notions. Several times I have heard one, after eating in the house of an intimate friend and neighbor say "thank you." In Los Angeles I have seen a cigarrito offered as a compensation for lighting one.

And the rapacity of Californian mistresses is equaled only by that of the Parisian grisettes. The picture of the miner, turned wool-grower or farmer, bringing home jewelry, dry goods and coffee on his quarterly pilgrimage to Los Angeles or San Luis Obispo, as an offering to his dark-eyed neighbor, is one less elegant in its details, but not less humiliating in its significance than that of the English or Russian nobleman laying millions in necklaces at the feet of his Parisian mistress. More than one good wife did I hear storming and clapperclawing these "squaws" in a manner which was quite unaccountable. More than one family of proud and ancient lineage did I find, who were once the lords of some great rancho, but were wheedled out of it by Americans, and had now no visible means of subsistence, who yet arrayed their daughters in unaccountable splendor.

These Californian girls are wonderfully graceful and fascinating, but they have no minds, and as soon as they catch an American husband, they are indolent, and let the hens get on the table, and the cat lick the cream. Many a poor fellow has cursed the day he married one of them.

Perhaps never since Adam fell from Eden has there been a sadder realization of Paradise Lost than is afforded by these native Californians. Before the discovery of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, whose root is the root of all evil, they lived here in an Abrahamic simplicity, amid their flocks and herds, which roamed over ranches so vast that a nimble horseman might gallop across them all a summer day. So artless and so unsuspecting was their hospitality, that they asked the stranger no questions, but gladly offered him their simple cheer, and their rich red wine, and, at his departure, gave him the choice of their *caballadas* to replace his jaded steed. With none of that wealth which, when gotten at last, may turn to bitter ashes upon the tongue; and far from the miserable ambitions and janglings of mankind, they had found that place sighed for by Cowper,

> "Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
> Of unsuccessful or successful war
> Might never reach."

In a climate without heat and without cold, where they might sleep half the year long beneath a tree; living lives without labor, except the dreamy vigils over their herds;—the pen fails to reach or words to picture the happiness which came to them in those long, sunny years which rolled over the violet hills and the tawny valleys of California.

Then came the fatal discovery, and all this Paradise became a great, roaring Pandemonium, a hell on earth. Every canyon and every foothill swarmed with greedy gold-hunters, who squandered their money like water. These rancheros suddenly saw every bullock in their countless herds become a skinful of silver, and all the yellow marrow of his bones was like fat gold. Wealth was poured upon them as never on a whole people before.

They would have been more or less than human if they had not fallen before such temptation. These simple Arcadian shepherds became the most prodigal spendthrifts. Recklessly they gambled away their princely ranches, or sold them for a song to the "insidious Yankee." The attachment of the American sheriff became the "flaming sword," which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." They saw their fairest daughters taken by the Americans to wife, and their sons sitting in the seat of the gambler and the drunkard.

No more do their gallant wedding-trains of fair women and brave men, brilliant with their rude ornaments, their boots of Cordovan leather, and their luxurious ponchos, bordered with purple and wolf's fur, and spotted like a pard, sweep along the valleys from mission to mission. No more do the gay young cavaliers, sons of the rancheros, canter merrily in bands, to serenade beneath the windows of their dark-eyed maidens, or spur in breathless terror through the darkness, before the horrid phantom of the "Spectre Bull of Salinas." No more are their soft thrilling waltzes, and the tinkle of the light guitar, heard within their rude walls of adobe, undisturbed by the presence of the prying trader, while the rich, red wine of Los Angeles, passed around to all the guests in the simple gourd.

They are aliens and strangers now. Some of the sons of the proudest of the old rancheros, now wander as wretched squatters over the ancestral domain, or earn a precarious and miserable subsistence as common vaqueros.

Meditating on these topics one afternoon, I observed, at a great distance before me, a beautifully sheeny spot, directly beneath the sun. Mirage? No; it is too brilliant, and too brassy in color for that. It slowly gained in size and in brightness, and changed its tint to a richly mellow and slightly coppery lustre, like that of California gold. Then crossing a wide ravine, I lost sight of it for a time, and coming in view of it again, I plainly saw the tremulous filmy shimmer of water.

Oh, it is the Pacific! It is the Pacific!

On the foothills of the Santa Ines mountains, close at hand, there had lately been one of those terrible autumnal conflagrations which sometimes sweep over the dried plains and lower mountains of California, and they stood up all bared and blackened by the savage heat. The smoke still hung thick over the arid plain for miles around, and this was what caused the sun to shine with that strange glare upon the hidden ocean.

But what words could picture my delight! After so many a weary, weary month of trudging westward with the sun, to be walking down at last my three thousandth mile to the old, old sea!

Presently I could see the long white sea-parapets of drifted dunes, and the whiter surf, where the billows flapped their crystal wings upon the beach. Then came the murmuring of the breakers afar, and this deepened slowly into the grand and solemn sound of Ocean, whose every pulsation I could count, as he dealt stalwart blow on blow upon the ground.

Just where the mountains and the sea slit the terrace into a sharp angle, the little town of San Buenaventura straggles among the oranges and the walnuts, close beside the sea, which glasses its tiny commerce and its clam-shops. The smoke gathered over it at sunset, and in twenty minutes there was not a sound in its intensely dark streets, save the ceaseless, stupendous hammering of the waves.

Next morning I went down through a breach in the dunes, and laid my hand on the mane of the ancient brine. My task was done. But, to compare small things to great, I felt like Gibbon on the night when he completed his immortal history, and I determined to walk on to San Francisco.

The sun crawled drowsily up in the east, through the nearest approach to an Indian-summer day California ever gives, seeming to be sleep-enamored, as Onomacritus says of the moon. After crossing that great and weary continent of dust, I sat and dreamed and listened, and watched the cool, fresh play of the waves, lulled by the hum of their eternal restlessness into a deep and unspeakably restful peace.

Is it not quite as probable that Ctesibius learned the secret of the organ from the ocean, as that Pythagoras deduced the Æolian lyre from a blacksmith's anvil? Oceanus has an ear for harmony. He sings his long song through the centuries, not only pitched on many keys—the keys of the winds and the seasons, ranging through stupendous octaves—but with the parts as well in chorus as in the organ of St. Cecilia. There is the ponderous bass of the ship-breaker, bellowing as through a throat of mightiest brass, as it plunges on the strand; and the ear that listens lovingly to Ocean's song, can catch tenor, alto and soprano in succession, as it bowls upward its revolving edge on the clear-strung sand, with a metallic resonance, which trills each second clearer and higher. Within the hearing of an attentive listener, a score of billows are striking in unison the sounding chords. With my ear held close upon the beach, I could catch the multitudinous hum of the surf, old Ocean's solemn diapason in an anthem to the Eternal. Listen, ye murmurers and indolent, to the sea; the opulent, the generous, the strong; how yet he bows himself, and sings all at his toil!

Walking along this magnificent beach mile after mile, I presently met the first Chinaman I had seen, on the road. He was hurrying along in a funny kind of teetering dog-trot, bending his knees very much under an enormous weight, which he had in two bamboo baskets on a pole, slung across his shoulder. He had a straw hat broad enough to cover a California pumpkin, with only a knob on top big enough to take hold of, and a coat of blue glazed stuff, made like a shirt. The skin of his head was pulled back so tight by his tail that he could hardly wink his eyes, but he screwed them round toward me, and answered my salutation with, "hello!" as if he had dropped a flat-iron on his toes.

I thought that was pretty pert for a yellow boy; but I soon found the poor fellows knew no better, because white men had never condescended to address them with any more dignified word.

Afterward I often found them journeying up and down in the same patient, weary way, and tried to make friends of them, to see what manner of stuff they were made of. But I never could like them as well as the negroes. How often Cuffee has gladly gone out of his way to show me the road, or hastened, unasked, to throw a pole for me across the slough! But these fellows, even if they understood English, would plod doggedly along, and say as little as possible. They were very merry among themselves, but they seemed to fear that I would fall upon and beat them, as so many gentlemen of the road have done.

Santa Barbara is notable for the crookedness of its old Spanish streets. I started one morning to walk through it, traveled cheerfully on all the forenoon, among mean, little, brick and mud houses, where there was more of dust than of anything else, then walked briskly on till sunset, and stopped for supper at the same place I did the night before. There is a wonderful number of pretty school-children in the city, and many Mexican children not so pretty; also a very creditable number of schoolhouses. But the streets are so crooked that no child goes to the same school on two consecutive days, whereby they acquire an unusual breadth of knowledge. There was a lean and dusty pig trotting up and down the streets, which once had a very thrifty tail, but it had turned so many corners that that organ had become kinked into an inextricable knot.

Beyond Santa Barbara the coast-belt becomes a valley, with a ridge along the ocean, and all along the evergreen verdure of the oak alternates with the golden and russet ripeness of farms. The very mountains are fruitful with the fatness of the valley, and at their summits display their yellow cores, bursting through rinds of green. All that is celebrated in song or story of Grecian Tempe, is equaled in this valley of Santa Barbara. Here the hand of Winter often forgets, through all the months, to strew his frost. Here the roots which yield food to man may be planted and digged in any month of the twelve; and here a fig-slip without root, planted in the ground in spring, and watered, has borne and ripened a fig in autumn.

Yet, even here, the Eastern farmer finds much at first to dissatisfy him. His good wife is distressed in summer with a plague of dust, which gets into her eyes, gets into the beds, gets even into the pots on the stove; and the farmer himself is distressed by a plague of mud in winter. He can hardly get lumber enough to make his two-board fence, and his neighbor's swine slip under and vex his soul. He cannot afford to fence a pasture for the cow, and she roams at large, and comes home when she pleases. He has no stove-wood but the most gnarly billets of live-oak that ever tried the temper of the splitter.

And I am bound to say that the farmers of California are the most shiftless, thriftless men of the class that can be found in the Union, except, perhaps, in Texas. Every Saturday, and on many other days, they mount their horses and hie to the saloons, there to drink, gamble, and carouse. Not all, of course, but a great number. Many of them have no wives to keep them at home; there is no shade about the house, no shrubbery, nothing beautiful, nothing moist, nothing green; nothing but the paintless board-house, the hideous board-fence, the wagon, heaps of barley and bean straw, and everywhere dust, dust, dust.

Then there is such a quantity of gratuitous wagoning done. There seem to be no farmers at all, but teamsters. A man will hitch two, often four horses, into a magnificent high-seated wagon, and haul three boards this way, and a cock of beans back. You may often see two mighty wagons, nearly twelve feet high, hitched together, and drawn by eight, ten, twelve horses.

* * * * * *

James W. Marshall, the original gold-finder, came to California in 1846, was with the Bear Flag party, and in several of the fights which took place between the settlers and the native Californians. He afterward became a partner of John A. Sutter in the mill at Coloma, and was at work at the mill business in 1848, when gold was found.

The narrative of the finding of the gold, as given by an eye-witness, is as follows:—They were at work at a saw-mill. One evening, after the day's work was done, Marshall went into the shanty where were Henry Bigler and James Brown, two of the laborers, told them he believed he had found gold, and directed them to shut down the head-gate early in the morning, and throw in earth and leaves to stop the water.

This they did, and Marshall went down alone into the tail-race, and presently returned, smiling, with the remark:

"Boys, by ——, I believe I've found a gold mine."

He had his old white hat in his hands, with the top of the crown knocked in a little, and in this receptacle was about an ounce of the metal, almost pure. The men crowded about him, and inspected the precious stuff, and one Azariah Smith pulled out a five-dollar piece, to compare it with the dust. As that was Carolina gold, however, the color was not the same, but they supposed it was due to the alloy, for they were determined to believe it was gold.

Three or four days afterward, Marshall went down to see his partner at the post, and was gone four days; when he came back, he was asked what they had made of the metal, and he answered with childish enthusiasm:—

"O, boys, by ——, it is the pure stuff. I and the old Captain locked ourselves up and was half a day trying it; and the outsiders wondered what in —— was up, and surmised that I had found a quicksilver mine, for you see there is a quicksilver mine found by a woman down towards Monterey; but we let them sweat. We found it agreed with the encyclopedia, and we applied aquafortis, and it had nothing to do with it. We then weighed it in water by balancing the dust against silver on a pair of scales, in the air, having a basin of water. We let the scales down, and when it came in contact with the water, by ——, the gold went down and the silver up, and that told the story, that it was the clear stuff."

A few days afterward, Captain (now called General) Sutter, came up to the mill, and Marshall went into the shanty to tell the boys of it, and said to them:—

"And now, boys, we've all got some gold dust. I motion we give Henry Bigler some, and in the morning when you shut off the water, let him take it down and sprinkle it all over the base rock. Not let on to the old gentleman, and it will so excite him that he will set out his bottle and treat, for he always carries his bottle with him."

This was done. Just as the mill-hands were finishing breakfast, they saw Captain Sutter coming along, (a well-dressed old gentleman he was, the narrator naively adds,) with his cane in his hand, with Marshall on one side of him, and Weimer on the other. They all went out to meet him, and, after hand-shakings and salutations, they started together down to the tail-race.

Just then one of Weimer's little boys, who had innocently been down and scraped up the dust which Bigler had so carefully scattered as a bait for the Captain, came running with his hands full, out of breath, and cried out: "See here, how much I've found!" That nearly let the cat out of the bag, but they all kept still, and the Captain never suspected anything. Indeed, the ruse was all the better thus, for the old Captain, seeing how much a little boy could collect, thrust his cane into the ground, and cried out:—

"By Jo, it's rich!"

From that day forth the discovery was assured, and the news thereof was carried to the uttermost ends of the earth.

But from that day began Marshall's tribulations and calamities. About March, 1849, gold-seekers began to arrive. They squatted on Marshall's ground, and although warned off, refused to leave. Soon afterward some of the miners at Murderer's Bar, on the Middle Fork of the American River, ill-treated some Indians, and the Indians in revenge killed four or five white men. Only two of the white men escaped, and these went to Coloma and raised a company of whites in order to go to Murderer's Bar, to kill Indians. Instead, however, of going to the Bar, these men began to kill Marshall's friendly Indians. Marshall protected his Indians, risking his life in so doing, and was obliged to leave Coloma soon afterward to save himself from a mob. After remaining away awhile he returned to find his location surveyed off into town lots and in the possession of others. Soon after his return, men there, believing that Marshall knew more about the places in which gold could be found than he chose to tell, threatened to hang him to a tree if he did not go with them and point out the rich placers. Mr. Winters secretly furnished a horse, on which he escaped from this second mob. Afterward he was engaged in expensive litigation, and became financially ruined. The vandals took the timbers of the mill from which to make canes, and the miners destroyed the dam. Neither Marshall, Winters nor Bayley ever received a dollar for their property.

Hardly less complete was the ruin of Sutter, but he, being a man of influence, recovered enough to make his latter days comfortable. A California Legislature voted him a pension of three hundred dollars a month, but, to their great disgrace, refused Marshall one of one hundred dollars.

To save the hapless old man from absolute humiliation and the poor-house, G. F. Parsons, an Englishman of California, kindly wrote out his biography, the proceeds of which smoothed his way a little to the grave. Thus the charity which was denied by his own countrymen, was received from a foreigner.

CHAPTER XXII.

WITH THE SHEPHERDS.

WHEN that American Xerxes, John C. Fremont, invaded and conquered California with his little band, he found his Thermopylae in Gaviota Pass. But he was led around by a friendly guide, through a secret and precipitous pathway in the mountains, whence he emerged and fell upon Santa Barbara, like a thunderbolt from a clear heaven.

That guide was an Englishman. What is stranger still, he was the owner of a vast rancho, was identified with the country, and, by turning against the native Californians, had his rancho swept by fire and bullet, barely escaping with his life. But his Saxon blood was true to its kindred. I afterwards saw this remarkable man, and found him old and haggard, with maniac eyes—a man of such appalling outbursts of passion at times, that his sons were compelled to grip him like a madman.

Gaviota Pass is one of the most stupendous in California. Far up its majestic sand-stone walls tower perpendicularly into the heavens, carved and scarped into wonderous forms of beauty, semblance of honeycomb, foliations, corbels, trighyphos, moldings, and all those stony blossoms of old religions.

From the highest top of the mountains I looked down upon a great valley full of hills, covered with ripened wild oats, and sprinkled with evergreen oaks. It was a charming prospect. The oats were not glaringly yellow, but had faded in the dewless summer to a creamy tint, so that the hills seemed to be poured all over with milk of gold, and studded with emerald gems.

Along the middle of the valley wound one of those enchanting fogs, which are white before sunrise, but after it blush with a tender roseate purple, faintly suffused with a flush of gold. They are the rich autumnal winding-sheets in which California mourns her dead rivers.

I have spoken before of the number of wagoners in this country. Indeed, in these "cow-counties" there seems to be almost nobody but teamsters and tramps. I occasionally amused myself by watching the developments of human nature in the former. The latter are so numerous that they become a plague, and the wagoners would almost always whip up, cover me with dust, and go past at a great rate. When they were a few rods ahead, they would slacken their pace a little, look around, and, seeing that I was not running after them for a ride, would be a little astonished. Then they would slacken a little more, till I almost overtook them, and lag along for some time, to test me, and finally drive on again.

Other drivers would pass me at their usual gait, and I would quicken my pace a little, to keep alongside for my amusement. The driver would take an occasional squint at me from the corner of his eye, but I would make it a point not to seem to be aware of his existence. By and by his respect for me would increase to such a degree that he would say,

"How d'ye do?"

"Quite well, I thank you."

Then I would walk on a considerable time, wrapt in a brown study, his respect increasing rapidly all the while. At last he would look at me, and say, "Get in;" very seldom, "Get in?" Of course, I would be obliged to refuse, whereupon his respect would turn to astonishment, and he would be satisfied with nothing less than my whole little history.

On the upper side of the stream there is a narrow belt of champaign, and here, right in the parched and crispy middle of the grass, is the Mission Santa Ines. You see here the old Mexican terror of volcanoes, for all these "Tents of Grace" in California are pitched on plains which for seven months in the year are of an odious dust-color, though there are delightful groves of live-oak, at the foot of the mountains.

These missions generally stand in a mazy web of arcades, sacristies, dormitories, cells, and the like, all mud-built and roofed with red tiles; but the church itself is full of flaunting splendor. There are garish moresques, streaked in flaming yellow and scarlet along the tops of the walls; saints brilliantly frescoed on the walls, robed with gamboge, and with halos of brass around their heads, but so exceedingly lean and skinny-looking that they must have given these fat California Indians rather an alarming conception of future felicity; besides blue and white draperies of coarse glazed stuff, rude candlesticks, images, tinsel stars, etc.

There were some very black low-browed Indian vergers moving reverently about the church, placing a pall-covered coffin on an elevated catafalque, high above their heads. One of the most remarkable evidences of the superiority of the "extirpating Saxon" is exhibited in many of these missions, as in this one, in the shape of a grog-shop next door to the church, in a wing of the same building. On a Sunday morning you shall see forty or fifty Indians ride up, tie their horses to the rack, step into the grog-shop, then into the church—they can generally go from the shop directly in, through a side-door—then come out, and spend the remainder of the day lounging in the grog-shop.

I talked with one of these keepers of country grocerys, who had a great deal of Indian and native Californian custom.

"They are mighty sharp," said he. "They'll come in, and lounge round till they git acquainted a little, then they'll want seventy-five cents' worth on tick. Next day they'll come back and pay that, and buy perhaps two dollars worth on tick. Three or four days afterwards they'll come and pay that, and then want five dollars. So it keeps goin' till they git twenty dollars into you, then —," here he gave his finger a significant snap, "You bet your life you don't see 'em agin."

I went over a long way among the creamy hills, through the parks of oaks; and then emerged into the level valley of the Santa Maria, which is so vast that I could barely see the foothills in the haze. In October this valley is so dead and dried up that it is like the plains of Acheron, and odious as the valley of the son of Hinnom. Not a tree in sight. Nearly a whole day I was walking down this valley of dry bones of grass, bunch-grass, dead in white, plumy tufts, with a little wire-grass between. Even the squirrels were dried up, and I saw nothing but two Mexicans, wandering vacantly about, afar off on their horses.

That night I staid in a most forlorn hut, and talked with a rather intelligent stage-driver.

"Most all of these people in Southern California," said he, "except these big sheep-men and stock-ranchers, is the meanest and mangiest people I know of—'regular poor white trash.' And they're stuffy accordin', for you ask one of them galloots to git down on a heavy pull, and he'll act the pork, and grumble, and fight to the last inch. Now you ask one of these Californians to walk a little, or ride on top and he'll do it without a word. They're gentlemen, they are, you bet your life."

The jet-black and waxy adobe which is spread over the broad valley of the Nipoma produces the sweet, rich alfileria, a running grass greatly prized by farmers. This ebony ground is slit deep by the summer heats. Still the surface is very pliable; and lazy farmers sometimes harrow it to fill the crevices, "dry sow" the seed, harrow again, and so catch the earliest November rains. And they get barly enough. Indeed, the system of summer fallowing, followed by "sowing in the dust," is coming greatly into favor in the wheat districts, because it insures the crop whatever rain may fall.

Then I crossed again over one of those arid and dried-up champaigns, approaching San Luis Obispo. There is no turf in this country, even in spring, for the bunch-grass alone can live through that weary and dreadful summer, and all the grasses between come from the seeds.

San Luis Obispo has one street, and that street has a broad shoulder in the middle, and on the corner of that shoulder there is a restaurant, wherein a pretty girl brings you a tough mutton chop, then sits in the window, while a clerk tosses yellow apples to her across the very narrow street. It is about the meanest and the dingiest town in California. It is a monastical place, a kind of sacred wool-barn, being nearly equally divided between great wooden wool-houses and little red-tiled mud-huts. On the little low front of the old mission, just above the door, there is inscribed in Latin:

"How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Then I went on into the mountains, and beheld a spectacle of which I expect never to see the equal on earth. Before me there was a great sunny mountain, with a thousand indentations and dainty crinklings, like rumpled velvet, mottled with colors of whose richness only the pencil of Nahl or Bierstadt could fitly discourse. Here, there was a pale maroon or wine-color, or a cinnamon, or a cuir, or a gamboge, or that surpassingly rich and noble hue I have seen so often in California and nowhere else, which resembles nothing so much as a delicately frosted damson; and there, the ripened wild oats had faded in the rainless summer days, from their golden color to a subdued, tender, creamy tint, which seemed to float over the slope, lambent in a kind of flickering mellowness, now creeping a little in the breeze, and now dying in a lazy and delicious shudder.

On the other side of the mountains I descended to the valley of the Salinas, passing many miles through a noble and magnificent stretch of white-oaks, which names the famous hot sulphur springs, Paso de Robles. This place of course, had fallen a victim to the American mania for speculation. Not being much subject yet to the incursions of the fair sex, it was a favorite resort for peculiarly afflicted miners; and here one might glean such a notion of the morality of the "revolver-echoing canyon, the embattled diggings, the lawless flat, and the immoral bar," as nowhere else.

This is the heart of the great wool-growing region. Far in among the mountains, by the brink of some sequestered pool, you shall find the shepherd's little chalet of "shakes," and his corral of loose brushwood. The impudent coyotes nightly inspect the corners of his habitation; he hears at midnight the coarse, rough hairs of the grizzly brush against his cabin door, and the long and hungry howl of the cougar floats athwart his dreams. There is no ministering angel to cook his mutton and beans. He leads his flock abroad on the hills, aromatic with sage, and mint, and rosemary, and purple tar-weed. Thus he lives, and all through the glorious cloudless summer of California he lounges "mony a canty day" over the ripe and sunny mountains, and envies no soul.

Here he is, sitting by his flock. Ah! child of poetry and of Nature, how my soul goes out to thee! How my heart envies thee! See, he looks up; he smiles.

"Stranger, you couldn't give a feller a chaw of tobacker, could you? Dern my skin if I've hed a chaw fer a coon's age."

The great sheep-runs of California, like those of Australia, are a kind of mild form of Botany Bay for the respective mother countries, where are gathered all sorts of eccentric and unfortunate characters, from a bishop's son or an editor, down to a runaway sailor. Among these I found a most comical genius. He was an Englishman, the son of great wealth, well educated and well read, but self-exiled for some reason or other, and wandering over the earth. He had a facile face, and, in the midst of a story, with a single grimace he would set the camp in convulsions.

He took a fancy to me, and set out to travel with me, abandoning his situation and good will, though he had hardly enough money left to buy a sheep. We set out at noon, and that afternoon we talked incessantly, though toward evening he began to complain bitterly of his boots, which galled his kibes. Next day, under this smart, he developed a most infantile peevishness and petulancy, and protested a score of times that, if he had some strychnine, he would swallow it, and so make an end. After three or four days I got his consent to go on more rapidly than he could travel.

I was astonished at the atrocity and bloodthirstiness which this class of men exhibited toward the Chinese. One day I came up to a party of a dozen of them, squatted around a fire by the shearing-camp, and fell to talking with them. Presently one of them, who had a flat nose, sleepy eyes, and a face like a satyr's, said, probably to draw out my sentiments:

"I wish I had here to-night every —— Chinaman in California, and every white man as stands up fur 'em, and they all had one neck, so as I could wring it off."

It requires a great deal of land in California to maintain sheep. For long month after month they nip and tweak the same tufts over and over again, without any fresh growth. The rains which commence falling in November sometimes destroy the old grass before they give new; then the sheep stand under the oaks, and stretch their necks up toward the long festoons of pea-green moss. These grow heavy with the falling rain, swing and swing and drop, and the sheep munch them greedily, running from tree to tree, and scattering widely; and then the hills resound with the sanguinary remarks of the shepherds respecting the nature of sheep in general, and the atmosphere is blue with their cursing.

In the valley of the Nascimiento I herded sheep several days myself, for a new sensation, and was rewarded with some delightful experiences.

Among other things, I heard a humming-bird sing. After whizzing all the morning about the champaign—aromatic with the purple tar-weed—a certain one would invariably perch on an oak limb, and chirrup continuously for nearly half an hour. Its song is that cool, metallic piping of the cricket—that "modulated shade" which Thoreau heard—but infinitely finer and subtler. Not in all my life, not even from the violin ot Carlo Patti, have I heard such an exquisitely fine, yet clear, crisp melody, as issued, scarcely audible, from the throat of that little singer.

Then I saw the little California woodpecker drill a circle of holes in the body of a tree, and fill them with acorns, hammering them in with his hard, tough head. Then there were the bluejays, which bear a very opprobrious reputation in the East, but which here are a model of industry and foresight. For several days together I saw a colony of them work from morning till night, carrying acorns down to the river bank, where they secreted them in the sand. An old Migueleno told me this presaged a winter of want, and so it proved.

There was a little Migueleno boy, old enough to be a shepherd, with a face as round as a pot-lid, and black eyes which absolutely danced with mischief. He was shy as a partridge, and would seldom come to the house, much less come in, even for his meals, until they called him; and when they called him, he would never answer, but start and run to his employer. One day the latter grew weary of being obliged to call him always, and he went out and took him by the ear, and led him to the table. The boy burst into an agony of crying, and seemed heart-broken, and it took him a whole day to recover his cheerfulness.

He had that "school-boy passion of giving pain to others," and, having run down a rabbit and pulled it from its hole, he hanged it by the neck till it was dead. There was an old Irishman, one of those wandering souls of California, who are never at rest till they drop into the grave. He was shattered by drink, and could not run fast, and the boy would poke him with a stick, then run and climb into a tree. One day old John came to the house, trembling and puffing after a chase, and said he:—

"Why, I believe that blamed Injun is trying to make fun of me."

He was very merry, and would even whistle a little at times, which I never heard an Indian do before. Out in the hills he would pull moss, then sit and feed it to his pets. He imitated perfectly every bird or animal he heard, and repeated over, and over, and over again, in his childish treble, little phrases in that most musical of all tongues, the Spanish.

The easy indolence with which he conducted his affairs was enviable indeed. O for the divine art of taking your time for it! for the inimitable and indescribable felicity of limberness and of laziness with which that Indian boy piloted his flock amid the hills!

Near the old Mission San Antonio, is the cavern which was formerly the refuge of the famous brigand, Jack Powers, one of the most magnificent and princely robbers who ever lived, even in California. He would ride on horseback, openly, through the streets of San Francisco; learn when a band of drovers were going down to Los Angeles with their gold; then spur hard day and night, rally his bandits, and swoop down upon their prey in camp.

A wealthy ranchero—an American—who began in poverty, and used to herd sheep, narrated to me some of his experiences with Powers. He and his men "drew" their groceries almost entirely from shepherd's huts in the vicinity. But they never took anything, even to the smallest sack of flour, without laying down for it a double-eagle. They never deposited a smaller coin for their stealings. The ranchero said he had come in at night many a time, wearied with running after his restless sheep, and found his potatoes, or his flour, or his flitch of Oregon bacon gone, greatly to his disgust; but there was always a shining "slug," fresh from the San Francisco mint, laid scrupulously in the place of each article.

For these reasons, the few settlers about were friends of the brigands, and even threatened and drove away officers who came to arrest them. This ranchero himself acknowledged that he had once recognized Jack Powers in San Francisco, when a word from him would have cost the brigand his life; but he did not "divulge."

To one who loves his country, and has studied the South, it is saddening to see California following so nearly in her footsteps. There is no slavery here, nor will there ever be; but there is here, superadded to the presence of a servile race, a vitiating influence worse than any the South ever contained. It is the mines. They create the slavery of fortune, which is followed, on the part of a large number, by the slavery of recklessness, restlessness, and despair. The towns are filled with the unfortunate and the wicked, and the country with unhappy wanderers, seeking the labor they will not remain to perform when found.

In going up the little valley of the San Antonio I saw many indications of the growth of a "poor white trash."* Mean huts of cottonwood logs, barely high enough for a man to stand erect therein; a can of wild honey, inside; a half-eaten carcass of venison hanging from a mighty oak, outside; a gaunt and sallow woman, with some almost naked children—that is the picture.

On the other hand, behold a man owning 60,000 acres of sheep-runs, so selected with reference to springs, streams, ranges, etc., that he has full control of 40,000 acres of Government land. On 1,000 acres of this land his poor neighbor could earn an honest living with sheep, if he could have the use of a certain spring just within the line of the bloated rancho. Is he permitted to use that spring? Ah! the other has "floated" his claim for the precise object of covering that spring and several others; and is he such a fool as to yield it now?

In the upper part of this valley I saw, for the first time, sycamores and cottonwoods clothed in that "green and yellow melancholy" which is the peculiar glory of Eastern forests, and which is so rare in California.

Who can measure the sweet influences of the Eastern autumn upon our better life! If this favored country has any great natural deficiency, it is one of trees. And a great part of what it has are exempt from that alternation of decay, which brings round those yearly lessons so wholesome to busy man, to remind him of that which shall be hereafter. The unfruitful, hard, intractable nature of the ancient Israelites and the Spaniards—who knows how it might have been mollified by forests, on which the ever-returning autumn might have painted its sweet, saddening lessons? The autumn, or rather summer, of California, if the people look away upon the hills, reads them much of the poetry of earth; but there is not in it that "most musical, most melancholy" rhythm of decay, which so ripens all that is divinest in the heart.

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*I beg the reader to permit me to use this phrase, for none other will express to Americans so much and that so truthfully.

Every Californian should plant his new-born son a row of trees, like Laertes; and every bevy of maidens, like the companions of Helen in their epithalamium, should consecrate to the bride a sycamore. It should be deciduous, just for the effect of the falling leaves.

Entering upon the mighty plains which form the valley of the Salinas, there is a spring from which it is twenty miles to water. This valley is an execrable place at best. Every day for seven months there rises, about ten o'clock, a wind which blows at a furious rate till nearly midnight. The dry bed of the river yields so much sand that it constitutes what is called the "dry fog." The live-oaks which creep out a little way from the foot of the hills are permanently bent over, and look like old men leaning on their hands, with their coat-tails blown over their heads. Such a blast I had to face for fifty miles.

The life of a *vaquero* on the great Salinas plains is eminently free and easy. The naked and cheerless adobe generally stands under the lee of the river bank, to hide from the fierce winds of summer afternoons, or else back between two foot-hills. At daybreak he is in the saddle, with his *riata* coiled on the pommel and his blanket strapped behind the cantel, and off like the wind to herd the cattle together.

Toward noon the Chinese cook may be seen, with his bare pate glistening in the sun, and his pigtail flapping gayly, sweeping the horizon with his telescope. If the black dots are moving toward the house, he goes in and hangs on the dinner-pot. He has no special need of hurry, for they may ride their swiftest, and not arrive for a half-hour.

At last they gallop up, their horses puffing and their flanks bleeding from the cruel, monstrous spurs. A stranger arrives, perhaps, and with a simple *buenos dias*, enters the house. They sit up to the rude table, the stranger, as he is expected to do, taking a place without waiting for an invitation. Stewed mutton, brown beans, and strong coffee without milk, are the staples. Scarcely a word is spoken, for these vaqueros, being always with their cattle, are men of silence, especially if a stranger is near. Then the cigaritos are rolled and whiffed with that exquisite languor of motion native to the race, while the Chinaman helps himself.

After an hour of this *dolce far niente*, the saddle girths are tightened—for the poor horses owned by Mexicans get nothing from morning to night—and away they go again.

The afternoon is like the forenoon. After a supper which is generally pretty heavy, the white sheep-skins, the calico ox-hides, and all the store of gray and scarlet blankets are spread on the hard earthen floor, and the vaqueros lie down on their backs, for another hour of cigaritos, and, perhaps, some stories of grizzly bears, brigands, and the like. Then they roll over, and soon the room is full of snoring. The only door is shut tight, there is not a window in the room, and presently the atmosphere bears a resemblance to that said to have prevailed in the Black Hole.

The stranger finds himself strongly tempted to gather up his soft, thick, fleecy California blankets, and go out, and bivouac under a live-oak beside the river. The peculiar circumstances of California have developed that blanket, unequaled in the world, which, to the poor farm-hand wandering about in search of "jobs," is house, bed, stove, chair, cushion, all at once. During five months every year I venture to say there are ten thousand men in California, the so-called "blanket men," who do not sleep ten nights in a house. Lumber is dear, and houses are small, but the blanket is all he needs.

In the valley of the Salinas I felt my first earthquake. I must confess it disturbs one's notions of safety sadly, to have the solid ground shaken beneath him. If the earth is not safe, what more have we left?

It was not quite what I had expected. I thought there would be a sudden and sharp concussion, followed by a rattling of glass things; but, instead of that, the house set out good-naturedly on a kind of majestic, elephantine jig. But it is a kind of jig that takes the marrow out of a man's bones mightily. It scares a nervous man dreadfully, and makes him feel as limp as a cloth.

In the northern end of the valley I found the true and typical Californian, the American miner turned farmer. And such a farmer!

First, there is his "shanty," a little shell of unpainted, unplaned, redwood boards set on end, looking like a cedar goods-box, and so little that a man might steal it away at sunset. It stands in the middle of a vast arid plain, without a fence, or a bush, or anything whatever in sight. This style of house is the real equivalent of the Eastern log-cabin.

There is one room before, and one behind. In the front room there is nothing but a trunk and a roll of blankets; in the rear room is the stove and our bachelors "things," which consist of a sack of "spuds," another of that wonderfully white California flour, a side of "States' bacon," a bottle of cognac for his coffee, and dishes. He uses a fresh set every meal, and washes them all in the night.

Upon looking around for his farming implements, I discover a pile of redwood lumber, and a promising terrier pup, which waggles its tail with great joy, for it sees nobody from morning till night. In due time, however, posts are set a little way into the ground, a single board atop is nailed around a field, a crop of wheat sown and harvested, and gathered into a barn, now built, The mania of these farmers for wheat is carried to a pitch of absurdity. He came here only and solely for wheat, he talks of wheat, he dreams of wheat, he thinks only of wheat, and he means to go away as soon as he gets enough wheat; but, unfortunately for him,—or fortunately, perhaps—he is entrapped by some wheat-colored Spanish maiden.

Presently a bedstead appears in the corner, and some wheat straw is stuffed into a tick and laid thereon. The room is now ceiled with newspapers, and chairs are introduced. The maiden arrives, and takes possession. The man came for wheat, and remains for domestic felicity, which consists of beans and mutton twice a day.

I shall finish this tale of mine with an ox-tail. It hung in a little hotel, right over the wash-stand. It was none of your dainty switches, but an original and undiminished tail. I thought perhaps it was to be swung over the supper table, as a terror to all flies, but I watched diligently, and at last discovered its proper function. It was used to clean combs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DOWN THE VALLEY OF GARDENS.

ONE of the notable phenomena of California is the multitude of its tramps, the so-called "blanket men." I seldom met less than a dozen or fifteen a day, and they all wanted to talk about an hour apiece, and narrate their grievances, so that they became an intolerable nuisance.

While I am yet a great way off, sighting me, he says to himself, "Well, there's another man peddling gab out of a boot-leg," and then he slings down his roll of blanket, sits down on the same, and pulls out his vile clay-pipe. His toused hair is full of wheat-straw, and some of it sticks out of the top of his hat.

"Ain't you goin' to sit down, Cap?"

"Really, I haven't time."

"Why, set down! What's the use of rushin' about the country that way, like a green monkey a-beatin' tan-bark? Set down, and let's have a little chin-music. Don't I look like your uncle?" With that he begins to whiff.

"I am not aware that I discover any marked resemblance between yourself and any of my avuncular relatives."

With that he gives me a look.

"You'd better set down."

"How do you like California?"

"California is a bilk! I'm goin' down to Arizona, and if I ever get out of this country once, and come back again, you may have my head for a foot-ball. I'm a carpenter by trade, and a man back here the other day, by ——, he offered me three dollars a day! Sho! I hope that man may have to keep tavern after everybody else is dead. Three dollars a day!"

If wheat is to be grown forever, and almost exclusively on the great body of the arable land of California, then these immense ranches, and the consequent hireling system, so baleful to California hitherto, will be perpetuated. But if the old Spanish belief, of the absolute necessity of irrigation for all green crops, can be exploded, and it can be shown that a farmer can produce almost anywhere on good land the variety of little crops, which all farmers have in the East, then California will have a future,—it will have a population. A great number of little farms will absorb this vagabond element continually drifting down out of the mines; whereas, if the land remains in vast ranches, these men will always continue hirelings and tramps.

In this view of the matter, it becomes of momentous importance to demonstrate that common land will produce green crops without irrigation. I will give here, in his own words, the result of an experiment made by a notable agriculturist:

> As an illustration of what sub-soiling will do for vegetation after one of our dry winters, I will mention an experiment of my own made after the winter of 1863–64. when but ten inches of rain fell. On the first day of July, 1864, I selected, on the highest part of my land at San Mateo upon hilly ground, a smooth, hard piece of sod ground, a rod square, that had never been plowed, and which was to all appearance as dry as the peak of Mount Diablo. I had it dug out with pick and spade to a depth of twenty inches, throwing all the earth out of the excavation, and then putting it back again. I thus had a good mellow bed. The earth for the first six inches was as dry and hard as if it had been in an oven. Below that depth it contained only dampness sufficient to distinguish it from being dry. In this rod square of loosened earth I planted about thirty pieces of potato, and raked the ground over smoothly, and left the experiment to its results. Not a drop of water was put upon it. Of course no rain fell on it that season, and nothing what-

> ever was done but to leave nature to its course. For five weeks there was no sign of vegetation apparent. Not a weed nor potato top was to be seen; and after daily inspecting my dry dust bed for that period, and I had begun to consider the experiment a failure, I found the green buds of my potatoes just peeping through the surface. From this time they grew marvelously, and before the 1st day of October the whole rod square was one thick bed of potato tops, of the deepest green color, an inch in diameter, two feet in height, and covering the ground so that the soil was not visible. On the 1st day of November I had the crop dug up, and got 125 pounds of potatoes as large as my double fist, and as fine as any I ever saw.

Such an experiment is worth more to California than the discovery of a gold-mine.

From the Gabilan Mountains I looked down on the little town of San Juan, glaring so nakedly white and red in the hideous desert. Descending to it by the numerous windings by which the road pitches down to the plain, I found it only another redwood town.

One wearies of them, these redwood towns. Everywhere a great clatter of lumber, and rattle of hammers, and savory smell of cedar. A man builds a habitation of redwood boards in five days, at a cost of forty-five dollars. Then he lives in it, and calls it a house, and his business waxes mighty on the face of the earth.

The drinking-saloons, flashing with cut-glass and gilded labels, are thicker than in Mississippi. Here, at whatever time of day, you shall see a fine-looking, broad-shouldered, bronzed-faced man, wearing a white Chinese hat, enter and invite everybody, friends and strangers, to assist him in drinking. They all collect together in a group, and it is characteristic that, while the liquors are mixing, the giver does most of the talking, the others only smiling.

"Here we go!" says some one.

Then everybody nods and smiles more than he was smiling before; there is a suggestive silence; the bottoms of the glasses all wink at each other, as if to say, "what did I tell you?" then everybody looks cheerful. Everybody understands himself, and keeps well within bounds, because the ceremony has to be repeated so often during the day; and it is only occasionally that you see one who is indiscreet, and, with his hat on the side of his head, he insists on shaking hands all round, and congratulates everybody on his good health, and the salubrity of matters in general.

Around San Juan there are vast wheat-fields, and here, in the season, you may hear for weeks together the clatter of the reapers and the headers. Then all night long you may see John Chinaman binding sheaves by the light of the stars or the moon, and sleeping by day in his blanket under a tree. It is not that he is trying to labor in the same hours they do in the Central Flowery Kingdom, but because the straw is too brittle by day.

One begins now to note the windmills, which stud the valley everywhere, not swinging four great arms around in a drowsy way, like the Dutchmen, as if they were going to sleep, but smirk and dapper wheels, which whistle round on a breezy day like a flax-wheel. This wooden Aquarius stands on four legs right over the well, and holds on his shoulder, twenty or thirty feet high, a prodigious tank, which it is his business to keep constantly full. Being painted white, he looks very neat and clean, and he makes the piston-rod fly up and down at a great rate, while the water runs far out in troughs, and spills out over the gardens.

And it is the gardens thus watered which produce the vegetables that have made the Californians seem to the East to be great liars. Great are the products of California. All night long, when I looked from my little window in Gilroy, I saw the yellow moonstones shooting from the sky; and in the morning I found them all in a neighboring field—a pumpkin, every one. The carrots are like Chinese babies, as if the earth had been plugged full of them on the other side, and they had slipped up through; while the beets, on the other hand, like genuine Californians, are sinking shafts in the other direction. The strawberries declare a monthly dividend throughout the year, at the rate of five berries to the pound.

It is a noble and magnificent valley which leads down to San Francisco Bay. On either side, some miles away, are the reddish-purple and hazy sierras, and all down between them pours the broad sheet of golden grain, islanded with live-oak clumps and groves. Ah! these wide and tranquil farms, hazy in their autumn rest, so rich and so ripe in their glory of shining ricks, and of fattened bullocks, and of pumpkins! Countless barns, too great before, stretch out still more their wings of sheds, like a hen-mother hoisted up and shoved about by her growing brood, vainly seeking to cover these yellow chicks of the harvest. A miracle of wheat is this Santa Clara wheat, so white, and so sound, and so flinty.

It is a pleasure indeed to enter San Jose after a tedious journey. In all this white and weary land, here is one green town. San Jose looks as neat, as sprinkled, as swept-up, as any Jersey village. There is too much glitter and whiz in its wooden streets, but they have a way of throwing water around, and washing the shrubbery, and spurting it against the windows, which gives a delightful coolness.

Precious in my memory is San Jose, brightest of Californian towns. No words can express how sweet to my eyes was this first Northern town, after crossing a frowsy South, and a continent of dust. Long did I linger in the suburbs, in the multitudinous orchards, and let my eyes swim and splatter in this cool water of greenery, while I washed my dusty throat with pears, and my soul was comforted exceedingly.

White suburban residences are tolerable here, if anywhere in California, by reason of the moors or everglades and the plantain-covered flats, which keep green through all the summer. These and the orchards conceal the arid champaign, and justify the color.

Then I went on down through the classic Santa Clara, and Mayfield, and Redwood City, and San Mateo. How oddly these dreamy old names of Spain are jumbled with our American lumber! In the city of Redwood I took a drink, but I slept in the city of St. Matthew.

All the way from Mayfield to San Mateo it is only a summer suburb of farms for San Francisco. These noble natural groves of oaks, all swept clean of undergrowth, with here and there the turret of a villa peering among or above them, and an occasional hedge-row, remind one continually of England. But the drought kills all lawns, and now and then there is an extremely garish residence, with a board-fence, which recalls one to America.

But the eye is never sated with these groves and these villas, the distant violet hills, the wide and tranquil farms, and all the beauty of mellowing orchards, and of wheat-fields, and of shining ricks. And now, at last, you can look far down across the brown sea-marsh, and see the dream-ships dimly come and go in the haze upon the viewless estuary, sailing right among the cattle.

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It may be well in this place to say something briefly of country life in California. And the thing first to be said is, that there is not another State in the Union where everything outside of city limits is so unrural, so contractor-like, so temporizing, so devoid of whatever is poetical, romantic and snug in the old farmer-life of our East. I did not see ten honest, hard-fisted farmers in my whole journey. There are plenty of city-haunting old bachelors and libertines, who own great ranchos and lease them; and there are enough crammers of wheat, crammers of beans, crammers of mulberries, crammers of anything that will make their fortune in a year or two, and permit them to go and live and die in "Frisco." Then, for laborers, there are runaway sailors; reformed street thieves; bankrupt German scene-painters, who carry sixty pounds of blankets; old soldiers, who drink their employer's whiskey in his absence, and then fall into the ditch which they dug for a fence-row; all looking for "jobs," or "little jobs," but never for steady work.

California always will, in my opinion, be abnormally and unhealthily active in its cities, while its rural life will be suffered to fall into contempt. There is something dry, something dusty, something windy about the country, which drives men into the cities. It is not unlikely that within two centuries California will have a division of population something like that of ancient Greece, to wit: merchants, artisans, and many great lords of the soil, in the cities; and in the country a kind of peasantry of goatherds, shepherds, tough, little, black-haired, lazy farmers, and the like, to whom the cities will be unwelcome resorts.

It is fashionable with men who know practically little of what they affirm, to call California the workingman's paradise. The time has already passed when it was a paradise *for* workingmen, and it never was, and never could be, so long as the mines existed, a paradise *of* workingmen. The comparatively small number of laboring men who have been persevering have been so amazingly prosperous, and deposited so much in the savings banks, that tourists have been deceived, and have overlooked the multitudes who have nothing in the banks.

It is saddening to see California attracting to itself so many butterflies—men who are not so much beggars in body as in soul. Most of these in the northern part of the State are single, and their influence will perish with them; but Southern California, as I have already noted, is gathering to itself poor and worthless families, who will perpetuate that wretched sort of population.

I have found fault enough, certainly, with the laboring classes, but it is because I have their welfare most earnestly at heart, and because they, by their own vagabondism and debaucheries, are bringing down upon themselves the distrust of employers, and consequent griefs. But I have a bone to pick with the employers, particularly with the great wool-growers and rancheros of the South, with whose habits I am better acquainted.

In the first place, there are many rich men among them who treat any kind of laborer, white or yellow, good or bad, like a dog. Not in the Southern States even are white men so pitifully fed and lodged.

In the second place, there are many who have been made so distrustful by the outrageous conduct of laborers, that they insult every new one who approaches, and thus repel deserving men, between whom and themselves, with a little forbearance, there might grow up mutual kindness and respect.

In the third place, and worst of all, there is in Southern California a feeling of caste, which seems almost to have been shaped in the old Spanish molds, and is deplorably un-American.

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The story of Commodore Sloat's seizure of California, in 1846, on behalf of our Government, as related to a friend by the venerable Commodore himself, is as follows:

The Commodore was lying at Mazatlan with a frigate and a sloop-of-war—while Admiral Seymour, of the British navy, was there with the line-of-battle ship *Collingwood.*

Sloat had orders to take Monterey whenever he heard of actual hostilities between the United States and Mexico. Circumstances led him to believe that Admiral Seymour had similar orders, or that there was an understanding between England and Mexico that the former should take California and hold it from the United States. A courier arrived from the City of Mexico bringing despatches to Seymour, but none to Sloat. Seymour was, after the arrival of the courier, "all in all" with the leading Mexicans, while they looked daggers at Sloat.

The Commodore watched the movements of the Admiral. The English ship hove her cables short and made ready for a voyage; the two little American vessels (little in comparison) did the same. The *Collingwood* weighed anchor, and, with clouds of canvas spread, moved majestically out of the harbor. Within a half-hour the *Savannah* and the *Preble* were plowing the bosom of the deep, while the mind of the gallant old Commodore was made up to take California, or have the American Navy number two ships-of-war and one Commodore less. On the 7th of July, he arrived at Monterey, without having seen anything of the *Collingwood*, and lost no time in demanding the surrender of the town, and soon, without firing a gun, the Stars and Stripes floated over the fort and the custom-house.

Shortly after the surrender, the *Collingwood* hove in sight. The decks of the two American vessels were cleared, the matches were lighted, the gunners stood by loaded cannon, and the yard-arms were full of men ready to drop the sails on the instant of a signal. "In fact," said the Commodore, "we did everything but show our teeth"—run the guns out at the port holes.

On came the *Collingwood*, and dropped her anchor within a stone's throw of the flag-ship. The Commodore instantly lowered a boat and sent an officer with his respects to the Admiral. The Admiral came in person to return the compliment. His practiced eye could not help but observe the preparations for immediate action.

"You seem to be about to give your men some practice in the art of gunning," said the Admiral, as he shook hands with the Commodore.

The American commander pointed to the flag on shore, and remarked that he did not know but it would take some practice to keep it there.

"Will you answer me candidly one question?" asked the Admiral. "Did you get any dispatches through Mexico just before you left Mazatlan?"

"I did not," was the prompt answer.

After a few moments study, the Admiral said: "You did right, perhaps, and your Government will no doubt sustain you; but there is not an officer in the British Navy who would have dared to take the responsibility you have taken. You doubtless had orders to take Monterey in case of war, but when you left Mazatlan there were only a few leading Mexicans and myself who knew of the existence of hostilities. It is all over now," he continued, "but tell me, Commodore, what you would have done had there been, when you reached here, the flag of another nationality floating where yours now floats, and that flag guarded by a ship-of-the-line?"

"I would," said the Commodore, "have fired at least one shot at it; perhaps have gone to the bottom, and left my Government to settle the matter as it thought best."

Thus was won for the Republic this peerless California, "the beloved Benjamin of American States, whose Autumn sack is stuffed with grain, while the mouth of it contains a cup of gold," as Starr King has it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OUR ULTIMATE CITY.

IN September, 1846, three transport-ships were merrily bowling down the Atlantic, bound for California. They were bearing from New York to San Francisco, the famous Stevenson Regiment, whose roster subsequently furnished an imposing roll of pioneers, legislators, and millionaires to the Golden State—the darlings of Fortune, who not only "achieved greatness," but had it "thrust upon them."

Between New York and Rio Janeiro, on board the *Thomas H. Perkins*, there was born a child, whose father was a corporal, and whose mother was a sister of that sometime most dreaded brigand of California, Jack Powers. He was christened at Rio Janeiro, at the American Embassy, and named in honor of the vessel and her commander, Arthur Perkins Heffernan. Before the voyage was ended a girl was born, and the parents of the two infants made a romantic agreement that, at the proper time, if the children were so inclined, they should be married.

The vessel reached San Francisco in safety, and the regiment was presently dissolved. The father of young Heffernan kept store in Tuolumne in that red-letter year, 1849, and, with the assistance of his notable wife, accumulated large substance. In those days Tuolumne had no more worthy and respected citizens than Charles Heffernan and his kindhearted wife, while young Heffernan and his brothers and sisters frisked over the red foot-hills as wild as mountain deer.

About 1852 the family returned to New York, with a fortune of $100,000, but they frittered it all away in a single winter in Wall Street. Then they came to California a second time, and paid diligent court to the "fickle jade," whom they found no longer in a mood to shower golden fortunes into the laps of men, but exacting now hard tugging and sweat of their brows. Charles Heffernan, like so many old Californians, had become unsettled and unfitted for labor, and he made essays in politics, being several times elected a delegate from Tuolumne to Democratic State Conventions. Meantime, his boy was going his own wild ways. His betrothed of destiny is said to have been inclined to the match, but he had breathed too long the restless air of California, and he scorned the noose.

The sequel is soon told. In the winter of 1870–71, crime increased to such an alarming extent in Virginia City, Nevada, that a Vigilance Committee was organized, and among the death-warrants signed by the mysterious "Secretary 601" was that of Arthur Perkins Heffernan. Silently, at dead of night a certain block was surrounded, sentinels were stationed at the four corners, and the few late passers were bewildered to find themselves quietly taken by the arm by masked men, led home by circuitous routes, and dismissed with the advice to ask no questions. Surely and swiftly they gripped the doomed block in their enveloping cordon. When the morning sun came up in the east, and looked down through the thin, white air of Nevada upon that poor bauble of a town, flaring garish as a painted courtesan amid the cold gray *chaparral* at the foot of the hard, bald mountain, in a little dismal back-yard, among the smashed goods-boxes, the sawdust, the shards of bottles, and the faded gauds of their silenced orgies, his rays lighted upon Arthur Heffernan and others of his kind, hanging by the neck.

This for the story of a wayside inn. But we are now approaching San Francisco.

From the bluff of Point Avisadero we may look now, in these last days of October, on one of those strange and subtile landscapes of California which link it to the mystic Orient. On the dark blue inlet and the darker bay—so richly, lustrously blue that the artists dare not give it wholly to canvas for Eastern eyes—the white-winged ships lie fast-fixed as in a picture. There is not a sign of life, save where the heavy brant fly low along the blue, with a sound as clear and ringing as rapid strokes of a hammer on ice; or where the uncouth sledge-headed pelican lazily circles around awhile, then tumbles straight down upon his head. The farther part of this inlet and all the bay without are lapped in the warm and delicious white-lilac halo of the Bay of Naples, which mellows the opposite shore to a thing of the merest seeming.

At the head of the inlet there is a crescent rim of gardens, running a little way up on the slope, where the neat white windmills sleep and dream in the Sabbath morning stillness. These gardens carry us away from Italy to Germany, for they are a perfect checker-board of tiny squares; —one beryl-blue with colewort, or purple-red with cabbage; another yellow, or green, or white.

These huge and treeless hills, far off, seem clad in doeskin, smooth and soft as velvet; or when they stand in a peculiar slant beneath the sun, take on a damson-purple, all rimy-crisp with a soft and sunny flush of haze. Where they thrust out their bold promontories on the deep-blue bosom of the bay, they seem to float upon its surface. Look now across yon distant slope, where each unsightly, naked, wooden house seems to sleep as light as a thought on its broad and tawny-velvet bosom, as if it scarcely touched. Approach these Californian autumn landscapes, and they move your scorn, but seen at a distance, you cannot resist their secret power. There is that strange, desert glory, that wild and wizard something of transparency, of breath, of halo, which has for me an inexpressible fascination. Nowhere else on earth have I seen the light of the sun rest down on this beautiful world so tender as it streams down through this white-lilac autumn haze of California—such a light alone as could have inspired the passionate laments which Euripides puts into the mouths of Alcestis and Iphigenia, as they close their dying eyes. Hard was it for the ancient Greek to leave his beloved light; and to go down from this witching breath of California to the cold, bleak grave—that were the saddest and yet the sweetest death that earth could give.

And then, when we think of those lurking fires beneath, the sudden trembling and the moaning, the midnight terror, and the grim darkness, it causes us a deep pang of regret. Strangely and weirdly beautiful as Egypt's gifted but unhappy queen, California is yet cruel as Medea. Sister of Death, bride of Mystery, California robes herself in pallid garments to meet her spouse; and her white form gleams across to the mystic Orient.

California will be, like Greece, the home of genius, a land of light, of love, and of song. Its present sardonic, "Grizzly" humor will be mellowed down. It is not difficult to perceive one very fruitful source of that intensity of devotion with which even her adopted children cling to her already.

Then I went over where all these ponderous hills leap together in their nude, dithyrambic revels, and climbed upon the largest, Mission Hill. As I reached the summit, there stretched out far and long beneath me that which I have ventured to call "Our Ultimate City." The city itself and all that part of the peninsula east of the central ridge looks drearily sandy and dust-colored; while in the valley on the right the wooden suburbs come straggling out, all around the little, old, red-tiled Mission Dolores, which they rudely jostle out of its sleepy antiquity.

The western half the peninsula looks freshly green in its stubby *encinal*, which the sea-fog dusts and sprinkles. In the midst of it looms a little knoll, scarcely higher than the lofty crucifix which surmounts it, and hard by the white columns reared above Starr King and Broderick lift themselves high above the squat greenery, and look out over the wide Pacific. Lone Mountain! It is a dreary name for a most dreary grave-yard. Hard work have the scrubby and knurly bushes to keep the ocean winds from sweeping away the dismal waste of sand. When in those earlier years, one miner after another wandered wearily down from the place of his perished expectations, to die in his beloved "Frisco," and a little band of comrades brought him and buried him here, in sight of the coming ships, and planted at his head a piece of cracker-box—perhaps the only memorial of their native East, which he had so yearned to see—how lonesome then was this name—Lone Mountain!

* * * * * *

Although a metropolis of a region which produces silver up to the very clouds, and wheat down to the edge of the ocean waves, San Francisco has the most hideous site of all great American cities. During the winter, in the intervals between the weeping rains, there are snatches of weather which are paradisiacal; but in the summer afternoons the wind is forever combing the sand over the hills, and sprinkling it with a whistling swirl into every crevice and cranny. In the evening comes the rushing fog, and all the next forenoon it is sour enough to give the very weather-cocks the influenza.

Yet the health of the place is good enough, and one sees a plenty of faces which are fresh, and ruddy, and round. The local appetite is keen. The suavity and complacency of these well-fed, golden-bellied bankers are refreshing to contemplate.

It amused me to see people whisk their houses through the streets at such a rate. I have seen a three-story house trundle majestically along behind many horses, while a man bestrode the roof, and cried out, "Clear the track!"

One quickly notes that California children are almost as insufferable in their petulance as those of great Southern planters. This is a result for which there is cause enough, aside from other things, in the meekness of Chinese servants. It is most unfortunate for these children to be brought in contact with these pitiful and craven souls. The Chinese are too willing. They do too much; they are pampering a generation in indolence. They bear too much. I confess that when I see them set upon and pelted by these little jackanapes, I wish in my soul they would cuff them soundly. They need it, if ever children did.

As might be expected in a country where gold occurs in wedges, California has a strong tendency to split society into high and low extremes. There is some swift and resistless power of King Gold which greatly strengthens the strong, but crushes down the weak and the unfortunate into hopeless, dumb despair. This darling and sunny child of our young Republic is already old as Europe in suicide. The proud-hearted Californians learn very slowly to beg outright in the streets, and tourists who flit about a few weeks in the buggies of friends are easily deceived by the superficial tranquillity. But ah! the Lombards and the suicides! You shall see a man, utterly and crushingly ruined, calmly smoking at evening on the quays the cigar for which he paid his last dime; in the morning the blue waters of the bay flow above him.

Ah! heavy is my heart with sorrow and with pity, when I look back and remember the sad, fallen humanity I have encountered in this sunny clime, and with whom I have sat or wandered, listening to their broken stories, and beholding the bitter tears they wept in the anguish of a wasted and ruined life. O California, the peerless, so young, so beautiful, yet so old in sorrow and remorse!

As to the local love of scandal and backbiting, I can only add my testimony to that of Mr. Brace. But there is one prolific source of it which he does not develop.

A good many of the first women who came to these shores were energetic and adventurous servant-girls, who earned fabulous wages, and were petted till they were spoiled. Many of them became rich, and, in the great scarcity of women, married quite above their station. But these marriages generally produced an amazing crop of incompatibility, scandal, and connubial clapper-clawing, and the wives, feeling very independent, often left home, and joined themselves unto others, like Tennessee's partner's wife. There are also a considerable number of them "ladies living in San Francisco for the education of their children, while their husbands linger a little longer in Nevada, to complete their fortunes." The gorgeous robes and jewels of this class will deceive you for a time, but you will presently be set aghast by the remark, "You bet your life."

More men marry here for wealth or convenience than anywhere else in the Union, and they suffer accordingly. That queer Americanism "grass widow," is here supplemented by the other one, "spiritual widower." A poor man once remarked to me, with a most comically dolorous face, "Like so many other people, I thought I had a wife, but one morning I found I hadn't."

There is a wonderful aggressiveness and magnetism in the life of San Francisco, which is not easily explainable. A German scholar informs me that his countrymen yield up their language and their national distinctiveness here faster than anywhere else in Christendom, except among that most splendid of the races of humanity, the Magyars.

At the same time, there is a kind of subtility or conservatism of culture which is remarkable in so young a city. But this conservatism is prejudicial to business. Probably there never was another city of 170,000 inhabitants, of whom so great a proportion had traveled so widely and seen so much as had those of San Francisco. Yet in wide-reaching business enterprise the great city was put to shame by little Sacramento. Does intellectual expansion then give financial caution?

It cannot be explained that this monetary provincialism was taught by previous bitter experience in the mines, for Sacramento merchants had also had that lesson. Is it then that seaports are more cautious than inland cities?

But this sort of provincialism has not impaired their true and hearty loyalty toward our common country. To the Americans of this far-off coast the Union is as dear as to the millions of the populous East. Here, as yonder, the patriot soldier's grave beside the sea is watered by a mother's tears. In the words of their poet who is more racily and more truly Californian than any other, these people call across to us:

"O brothers by the farther sea,
Think still our faith is warm;
The same bright flag above us waves
That swathed our baby form."

And now, on that November day, I go out to complete my walk, wading over mighty dunes of yellow sand, heaped up by the wind and the ocean through ages.

Then, sitting there till the setting sun turned that narrow strait into a veritable Golden Gate, gorgeously overarched with lilac, and amethyst, and orange, I clambered down the cliffs to the beach. There I beheld the hand of old Ocean, with a prodigious flourish of his spray-wrought stylus, grave for me, in cuneiform characters upon the tablet of the strand, the exultant colophon of my long toil ended. Stooping, and dipping my hand into the brine, I said, The Sunrise to the Sunset Sea, through a weary footman, Greeting.

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